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by Charlotte Brontë

MAXIMS AND REFLECTIONS

by François, Duc de La Rochefoucauld

ESSAYS OF ELIA

by Charles Lamb

THE RUBAIYAT OF OMAR KHAYYAM

and

THE LUCK OF ROARING CAMP By Bret Harte

Socrates ADDRESSES THE JUDGES WHO CON-**DEMNED HIM**

Pietro Aretino TELLS MICHELANGELO HIS "LAST JUDGMENT" IS INDECENT

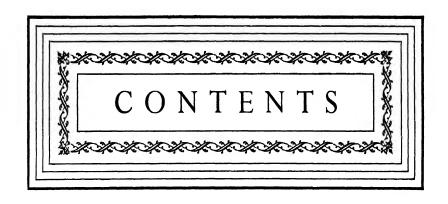


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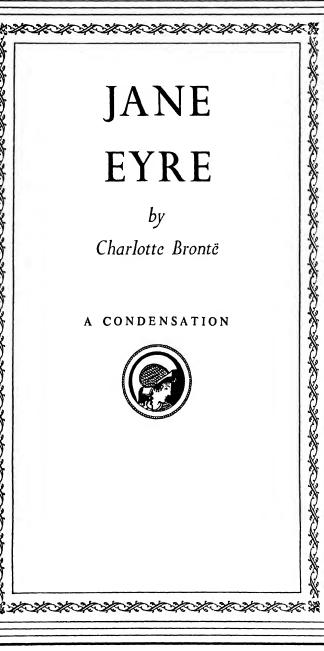
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Each Home Course Appreciation precedes its work.

ILLUSTRATED BY WILLIAM SHARP





HOME COURSE APPRECIATION



N AUGUST, 1847, an unknown author, Currer Bell, published a novel that was to become an immediate best-seller and an enduring classic. In December of the same year Acton and Ellis Bell also published novels. Their books did not sell, but one did become a classic. Currer, Acton and Ellis Bell were the pen names of Charlotte, Anne and Emily Brontë; the titles of their novels are Jane Eyre, Agnes Grey and Wuthering Heights.

Agnes Grey and Wuthering Heights were little noticed by the public or the critics. Jane Eyre, on the other hand, was acclaimed by both, and set literary London speculating about its author. Who was Currer Bell? Were Acton, Ellis and Currer the same person?

Charlotte Brontë (Currer Bell) was a woman of powerful personality. Outwardly she seemed the very picture of the proper Victorian lady. But her passionate nature, keen intellect and unusual upbringing would not permit her to be merely conventional. Vibrant with an intense inner vitality, she was strong-willed, conscientious and somewhat domineering. Born on April 21, 1816, Charlotte was the third of the six children of Patrick Brontë and Maria Branwell. Patrick Bronty was an Irishman who settled in England, changed the spelling of his name and became a Church of England clergyman. A serious, demanding man who was not easy to live with, the Reverend Brontë was not, however, the tyrant pictured by some of his children's more romantic biographers. Mrs. Brontë died when Charlotte was still a child, and a maiden aunt, Elizabeth Branwell, cared for the children.

The parsonage at Haworth was set in the midst of the grey, cold, windy Yorkshire moorlands. The stark landscape without, and the rather gloomy atmosphere within the house forced the children to devise their own world of pleasure and fun. They invented an exotic storyland, Angria, peopled with romantic characters who did exciting

things. They loved to tell one another stories about Angria and its people, and as they grew older they began to write strange tales about their fabled country. Scholars have studied these booklets (some are less than two inches square, with almost microscopic hand printing) and have learned much about the origin of the novelists' ideas and the growth of their creative abilities.

SCHOOLDAYS AND LIFE AT HAWORTH

In 1824, CHARLOTTE, Emily and their two older sisters, Maria and Elizabeth, were sent to school at Cowan Bridge. Maria and Elizabeth soon became ill and returned home the following year to die. Lowood Institution, where Jane Eyre spent eight years, is believed to be modeled on Cowan Bridge, and the pathetic death of Helen Burns bears resemblance to the death of Maria Brontë. Charlotte and Emily left the school shortly after their sisters and returned to Haworth. There they studied with their brother Branwell and sister Anne, and continued to write their fascinating little books. In 1831 Charlotte attended Miss Wooler's school at Roe Head and later she returned there as an instructor. It is said that while at Roe Head Charlotte heard the shocking but interesting story of a gentleman of the neighborhood who had married a young governess before it was discovered that his mad first wife was living in concealment.

The next few years were spent partly at Haworth and partly in the homes of families where Charlotte worked as a governess. She continued to write and sent samples of her poetry to Southey and a story to Wordsworth. The poets were kind but discouraging. Answering Wordsworth, Charlotte wrote: "I am pleased that you cannot quite decide whether I am an attorney's clerk or a novel-reading dressmaker. I will not help you at all in the discovery: and as to my handwriting, or ladylike touches in my style and imagery, you must not draw any conclusion from that—I may employ an amanuensis."

Charlotte then decided to open a school with her sister Emily. Miss Wooler advised her first to improve her knowledge of foreign languages and in 1842 the girls went to Brussels where they studied at the Pensionnat Héger. They were unusually apt pupils and Charlotte later became a teacher at the school. There has been considerable speculation about her feelings for M. Héger, a married man with five children. We do know that there was no love lost between Madame Héger and Miss Brontë. In 1844, when her father's sight was failing.

she returned to the parsonage. One day she found some poems that Emily had written and it turned out that all three sisters had been writing poetry. In 1846, at their own expense, and under their pseudonyms Currer, Acton and Ellis Bell, they published a slender volume of verse that sold but two copies. In the meantime, life at Haworth had become increasingly difficult. Branwell, whose character was weak, was a severe trial, and Emily and Anne suffered from poor health. The brother and two sisters died between September 1848 and May 1849.

Charlotte remained at home with her father, but after the success of *Jane Eyre* she did travel considerably in England. In 1854, at the age of 38, she married her father's curate, Mr. Nicholls. The next year Charlotte Brontë died of an illness incidental to childbirth.

JANE EYRE

Jane Eyre, by far Charlotte Brontë's best work, is one of the outstanding novels of the nineteenth century. The author put much of herself into the creation of the story and in many ways Jane resembles Charlotte Brontë. Through Jane, Miss Brontë expresses the dissatisfaction she felt in the dull and sometimes humiliating role of a dependent governess in a wealthy home and her vexation at the restrictions placed by nineteenth century society on a woman of intellect.

The novel has been criticized for its poor construction and there is some validity in the objection. For the story, when divorced from the headlong narration which gives it substance and credibility, is something of a Cinderella tale and the amount of contrivance and coincidence is too great to be readily accepted. But Charlotte Brontë was too sensible to permit her book to descend to the bathos of merely escapist literature; and the important element in discussing the right of any novel to be considered a classic is not what plot has been used but rather how it has been used. In this matter *Jane Eyre* requires no apologies. By her characterization and distinctive style, Charlotte Brontë transcended her commonplace materials.

THE CHARACTERS IN THE NOVEL

M. ROCHESTER is an excellent example of Miss Brontë's ability to create characters. He bears no resemblance to the stock romantic hero, distinguishable by a rather vapid character in spite of dashing good looks and the gallantry of the ideal lover. Jane Eyre, who nar-





Jane Eyre confronting Aunt Reed and Mr. Brocklehurst.

rates her own story, bluntly states that Rochester is ugly. He is more than twenty years older than she, a man with an irregular past and hardly the suitable mate for a proper Victorian lady! In drawing this remarkable but unconventional hero, Charlotte Brontë went beyond all previous novelists and invented a new type of romantic hero. He is a man who has sinned and been sinned against. Despite his lack of physical beauty, Rochester possesses a masculine attractiveness and a fine intellect. He soon became the favorite of half the women in England.

The secondary characters are sketched with no less skillful a hand. Mrs. Reed is clearly portrayed as a self-righteous, domineering woman, blind to the faults of her own children, but quick to reprimand and chastise young Jane. Mr. Brocklehurst, the preacher and school proprietor, who orders his pupils to remove from their dress any small manifestations of sinful pride, while beside him his elaborately dressed wife and daughters nod their agreement, suggests the type of do-good, hypocritical clergyman so scathingly denounced by Dickens. Adèle is a gay and charming child, while Mrs. Fairfax is sweet and kindly, but rather too dull a companion for Jane. The gallery would be incomplete if the lovely, intelligent Rivers sisters were left out, or if one overlooked St. John Rivers, dedicated, noble, unfeeling and priggish.

A NEW KIND OF HEROINE

Of all the characters in the book, none is better drawn than Jane herself. Through her eyes the reader sees the entire stream of events. Indeed, it is the force of her personality that makes the reader suspend disbelief and accept events in the story that he might otherwise reject.

Just as Charlotte Brontë departed from convention in her characterization of Mr. Rochester, so in Jane Eyre she created a new kind of heroine. Jane has practically nothing in common with the customary young lady of fiction. She is not a pretty, sweet young thing, with a complexion of peaches and cream and an empty head. Neither is she an ugly duckling who grows into a graceful swan. Jane Eyre is from beginning to end a plain girl with a clear idea of her own worth and a formidably direct approach to life. She does not chatter or flirt, but is serious, capable, calculating and intelligent; she has dignity, a startling simplicity, frankness and considerable charm, combined with

courage. Much of the success of the novel can be attributed to its heroine, whose effect on the Victorian reading public we come nearer to understanding when we see her beside any of the sugar-and-water heroines of the most famous and successful novelist of the century, Charles Dickens.

From childhood, Jane is outspoken and straightforward. When her indignation at the injustice of Mrs. Reed's treatment reaches its peak, she tells her aunt: "I am not deceitful: if I were, I should say I loved you, but I declare I do not love you." Throughout her life she disdains speaking anything save the truth, however bluntly. Jane says little, her conversation is always to the point, and she retains the coolest kind of objectivity in circumstances of stress. During the proposal scene in Mr. Rochester's garden, she is never the coy, blushing maiden. Once her suspicion is allayed her response is direct and without pretense. Moral integrity is one of the marks of her character. She refuses the extravagant gifts Mr. Rochester wants to bestow on her during the blissful days of their engagement. She is determinedly independent; even in the period of her desperate wandering she refuses to be indefinitely obligated to St. John Rivers and urges him to find her employment as soon as possible. Having neatly calculated that a fourth of her inherited fortune will provide her with a competence, she repays St. John's merciful help to her, and his sisters' bounty, by dividing the balance evenly among them.

THE FASCINATION OF PLAIN JANE

THERE IS A RESILIENCY in Jane Eyre that gives stature to her slight frame. She is not a cardboard "virtue-in-distress" heroine. She is self-reliant and resolute and incapable of sacrificing her principles to expediency. And she is a more than competent psychologist. Leaving Mr. Rochester means setting herself adrift from all she loves, but she requires very little reflection to make her decision. It was this clear-eyed Jane who shocked proper Victorians. It was not primarily out of a regard for what society considered right or wrong that Jane left Thornfield; at least as strong a motive was the recognition that to accede to Mr. Rochester's importuning was to fall into the group of his soon-discarded mistresses.

Mr. Rochester, who loves and understands her, describes her accurately when he says that on her brow are written the words: "I can live alone, if self-respect and circumstances require me so to do. I

need not sell my soul to buy bliss. I have inward treasure, born in me, which can keep me alive if all extraneous delights should be withheld."

But Jane Eyre is more than just sturdy and brave. Under the prim garb of a Victorian governess she is intensely passionate. Although she keeps her emotions under tight rein, her capacity for love is profound. The tragedy of her early years is that her need for affection is constantly frustrated, first by her isolation in Mrs. Reed's house, and then by the strictures imposed on her by the harsh discipline at Lowood. One day she cries for hours because her friend Helen Burns has been humiliated and punished. But her sympathetic nature cannot be destroyed even by the Brocklehursts. In her love for Rochester she achieves the fulfillment of her personality. It is the force of that love which causes her to leave him, to entertain the idea of accompanying St. John Rivers to India, and to "hear" the cry for aid that despair wrings from Mr. Rochester.

THE THEME OF THE NOVEL

Jane Eyre has been called the first emancipated woman in English fiction, and while there is some truth in the observation, it is not the whole truth. She faces serious social and economic problems; she feels out of place in the company of Blanche Ingram and her fashionable friends; she is acutely aware of the distastefulness of being dependent on her aunt, on Rochester and on the Riverses. But Charlotte Brontë was not writing a novel of social consciousness. Nor was she preaching a sermon on the way to achieve happiness. Her highminded seriousness about moral matters is no small part of her work, but it is not the theme of the novel.

Looking beyond externals, she depicts the inner world of her heroine. In large measure *Jane Eyre* is a psychological novel. It is the story of a woman's mind and of her responses to the challenges of existence. The sincerity and integrity with which Jane meets the demands of life form the core of the novel. Jane herself is the theme of the book.

While Charlotte Brontë portrays her heroine's mental activities, she does not neglect her physical surroundings. One of her greatest talents was for description. Though she did not lead a life remarkable for its wide or varied experiences, she observed well, and later was able to summon up a wealth of detail suitable to any scene she wished to create.

Jane Eyre is filled with memorable scenes—scenes that are vividly etched on the reader's mind, not by exhaustive cataloguing, but by the judicious selection and proper combination of sharply defined details. Jane's meeting with Mr. Rochester is one of the most famous in literature. Mr. Brocklehurst's visit to the classroom at Lowood; the interrupted marriage ceremony at Thornfield; Jane's wanderings on the moors; the events at Mrs. Reed's deathbed; and her first dismaying sight of ruined Thornfield Hall—the list is only a suggestion of the episodes that linger in the reader's memory long after he has put down the novel.

CHARLOTTE BRONTË'S GENIUS

Much of the fascination of *Jane Eyre* can be traced to its combination of high-romance and fancy with undeniably realistic characters and background. Charlotte Brontë mingles without contradictions the plausible and the implausible, the concrete and the unreal.

When Jane hears Rochester call her—he is at Ferndean and she at Moor House, distant thirty-six hours by coach—the event is invested with such authentic emotion that its physical impossibility is forgotten and it becomes instead an imaginative probability. It is also quite unlikely that in her wanderings on the moors, Jane should come upon the home of her cousins and that, while there, her identity should be discovered because of an event that occurs in Madeira, but once again, the genuineness of the narration lends credibility. To our ears, much of the rest of the plot "machinery" which was part of the romantic convention is equally creaky. Charlotte Brontë's particular genius lay in her ability to work within such conventions and to construct a work that impresses us not with its high-flown fancifulness, but rather with its substance and its actuality.

We are completely convinced of Jane Eyre's reality. She lives as truly as Charlotte Brontë herself. She and Rochester are as believable as many of the people we read about in newspapers and in history books. Instinctively, Charlotte Brontë understood that we need the real to satisfy the mind's demand for factual truth; the romantic to satisfy the spirit's demand for truths that lie beyond reason.

CHARLOTTE BRONTË'S OTHER WORKS

THE PROSE STYLE of Jane Eyre ranks with the finest of the nine-teenth century. There is a similarity between the author's writing

and the heroine's conversation: both are terse, simple, vivid and direct. Charlotte Brontë avoids unnecessary flourishes; there is no extravagant lushness, no use of words for words' sake. Thackeray, an admirable stylist himself, called the prose of Jane Eyre "noble English."

Charlotte Brontë wrote three other novels, *The Professor*, *Shirley* and *Villette*. *The Professor*, her first novel, was not published until two years after her death. Oddly enough, it was a publisher's encouraging note rejecting *The Professor* that led her to send him her second novel, *Jane Eyre*.

Both *The Professor* and *Villette* are based on Charlotte Brontë's experiences in Brussels as a pupil and teacher. *The Professor* tells the story of a young man who goes to Brussels as a schoolmaster, while *Villette*, which is *The Professor* rewritten, is the account of a young Englishwoman, Lucy Snow, and her experiences as a teacher abroad. After *Jane Eyre*, *Villette* is her finest book and the characters of Lucy, of Madame Beck, the tough-minded headmistress, and of Monsieur Paul are drawn with remarkable skill.

Shirley is said to be Charlotte's idealized portrait of her sister Emily, and some of the other characters in the book are based on Haworth friends, neighbors and relatives. The novel was published under her pen name of Currer Bell, but the secret of her identity was soon revealed when a former resident of Haworth identified both the author and the originals of the characters.



CHAPTER 1

THERE WAS NO POSSIBILITY of taking a walk that day. We had been wandering, indeed, in the leafless shrubbery an hour in the morning; but since dinner (Mrs. Reed, when there was no company, dined early) the cold winter wind had brought with it clouds so somber, and a rain so penetrating, that further outdoor exercise was now out of the question.

I was glad of it. I never liked long walks, especially on chilly afternoons; dreadful to me was the coming home in the raw twilight, with nipped fingers and toes, and a heart saddened by the chidings of Bessie, the nurse, and humbled by the consciousness of my physical inferiority to Eliza, John, and Georgiana Reed.

The said Eliza, John, and Georgiana were now clustered round their mama in the drawing-room: she lay reclined on a sofa by the fireside, and with her darlings about her (for the time neither quarreling nor crying) looked perfectly happy.

A small breakfast-room adjoined the drawing-room. I slipped in there with a volume stored with pictures, mounted into the window-seat, and, having drawn the red moreen curtain nearly close, I was shrined in double retirement. I was then happy: happy at least in my way. I feared nothing but interruption, and that came too soon. The breakfast-room door opened.

"Boh! Madame Mope!" cried the voice of John Reed; then he paused: he found the room apparently empty.

"Where the dickens is she?" he continued. "Lizzy! Georgy! (calling

to his sisters) Joan is not here: tell mama she is run out into the rain ---bad animal!"

"It is well I drew the curtain," thought I; and I wished fervently he might not discover my hiding-place: nor would John Reed have found it out himself; he was not quick either of vision or conception; but Eliza just put her head in at the door, and said at once:

"She is in the window-seat, to be sure, Jack."

And I came out immediately, for I trembled at the idea of being dragged forth by the said Jack.

"What do you want?" I asked, with awkward diffidence.
"Say, 'What do you want, Master Reed?'" was the answer. "I want you to come here"; and seating himself in an armchair, he intimated by a gesture that I was to approach and stand before him.

John Reed was a schoolboy of fourteen years old; four years older than I, for I was but ten; large and stout for his age, with a dingy and unwholesome skin; thick lineaments in a spacious visage, heavy limbs and large extremities. He gorged himself habitually at table, which made him bilious, and gave him a dim and bleared eye and flabby cheeks. He ought now to have been at school; but his mama had taken him home for a month or two, "on account of his delicate health." Mr. Miles, the master, affirmed that he would do very well if he had fewer cakes and sweetmeats sent him from home; but the mother's heart turned from an opinion so harsh, and inclined rather to the more refined idea that John's sallowness was owing to over-application and, perhaps, to pining after home.

John had not much affection for his mother and sisters, and an

antipathy to me. He bullied and punished me; not two or three times in the week, nor once or twice in the day, but continually: every nerve I had feared him, and every morsel of flesh on my bones shrank when he came near. There were moments when I was bewildered by the terror he inspired, because I had no appeal what-ever against either his menaces or his inflictions; the servants did not like to offend their young master by taking my part against him, and Mrs. Reed was blind and deaf on the subject: she never saw him strike or heard him abuse me, though he did both now and then in her very presence; more requently, however, behind her back.

Habitually obedient to John, I came up to his chair: he spent some three minutes in thrusting out his tongue at me as far as he could without damaging the roots: I knew he would soon strike, and while dreading the blow, I mused on the disgusting and ugly appearance

of him who would presently deal it. I wonder if he read that notion in my face; for, all at once, without speaking, he struck suddenly and strongly. I tottered, and on regaining my equilibrium retired back a step or two from his chair.

"That is for your impudence in answering mama awhile since," said he, "and for your sneaking way of getting behind curtains, and for the look you had in your eyes two minutes since, you rat!"

Accustomed to John Reed's abuse, I never had an idea of replying to it; my care was how to endure the blow which would certainly follow the insult.

"What were you doing behind the curtain?" he asked.

"I was reading."

"Show the book."

I returned to the window and fetched it thence.

"You have no business to take our books; you are a dependent, mama says; you have no money; your father left you none; you ought to beg, and not to live here with gentlemen's children like us, and eat the same meals we do, and wear clothes at our mama's expense. Now, I'll teach you to rummage my book-shelves: for they are mine; all the house belongs to me, or will do in a few years. Go and stand by the door, out of the way of the mirror and the windows."

I did so, not at first aware what was his intention; but when I saw him lift and poise the book and stand in act to hurl it, I instinctively started aside with a cry of alarm: not soon enough, however; the volume was flung, it hit me, and I fell, striking my head against the door and cutting it. The cut bled, the pain was sharp; my terror had passed its climax; other feelings succeeded.

"Wicked and cruel boy!" I said. "You are like a murderer—you are like a slave-driver—you are like the Roman emperors!"

I had read Goldsmith's *History of Rome*, and had formed my opinion of Nero, Caligula, etc. Also I had drawn parallels in silence, which I never thought thus to have declared aloud.

"What! what!" he cried. "Did you say that to me? Did you hear her, Eliza and Georgiana? Won't I tell mama? but first"—

He ran headlong at me: I felt him grasp my hair and my shoulder: he had closed with a desperate thing. I really saw in him a tyrant: a murderer. I felt a drop or two of blood from my head trickle down my neck, and was sensible of somewhat pungent sufferings: these sensations for the time predominated over fear, and I received him in frantic sort. I don't very well know what I did with my hands,

but he called me "Rat! rat" and bellowed out aloud. Aid was near him: Eliza and Georgiana had run for Mrs. Reed, who was gone upstairs; she now came upon the scene, followed by Bessie and her maid Abbot. We were parted: I heard the words:

"Dear! dear! What a fury to fly at Master John!"

"Did ever anybody see such a picture of passion!"

Then Mrs. Reed subjoined:

"Take her away to the red room, and lock her in there." Four hands were immediately laid upon me, and I was borne upstairs.

CHAPTERS 2-4

[Lectured on her obligations to Mrs. Reed, without whom she would have to go to the poorhouse, Jane was locked in the unused room in which her uncle, Mr. Reed, had died nine years before, and where his ghost was said to remain. Left all the rest of the day in the chill and melancholy room, with only the realization that she neither loved nor was loved, Jane fell at nightfall to remembering the superstitious stories told her by the servants. When she fancied she saw a vision of death and screamed for help, her aunt Reed thrust her back into the room and left her. Jane fell unconscious with fear.

When she came to her senses it was to find herself the object of the solicitous attention of both the apothecary and the servants, who feared she might die. The next day the apothecary, Mr. Lloyd, called again. He questioned the tear-stained little girl closely about the reason for her illness. Jane's direct answers and her apparent misery led the kindly man to recommend to Mrs. Reed that the child be sent to school somewhere. The suggestion served only to increase Mrs. Reed's displeasure with the child she considered an imposition on her charity; and from being a nearly equal, though grudged, sharer of her cousins' nursery, Jane speedily descended to the status of an unicrmaid in the household.

After three months of being thus shunned by her aunt, Jane was hustled one morning to the drawing room to be presented to Mr. Brocklehurst, a tall man of formidable appearance. He chid her for being naughty, and promised her aunt that Jane would

be watched. Jane then heard Mrs. Reed request that she be made useful, kept humble to match her prospects in life and retained at the school to which she was being sent even during vacations. When Mr. Brocklehurst was gone, Jane bluntly denied the character she had been given in his presence and passionately declared her dislike of the Reeds, mother and children, whose unkindnesses she vowed never to forget.]

CHAPTER 5

FIVE O'CLOCK had hardly struck on the morning of the 19th of January, when Bessie brought a candle into my closet and found me already up and nearly dressed. I had risen half an hour before her entrance, and had washed my face, and put on my clothes by the light of a half-moon just setting, whose rays streamed through the narrow window near my crib. I was to leave Gateshead that day by a coach which passed the lodge gates at 6 A.M. Bessie was the only person yet risen; she had lit a fire in the nursery, where she now proceeded to make my breakfast. Few children can eat when excited with the thoughts of a journey; nor could I. Bessie, having pressed me in vain to take a few spoonfuls of the boiled milk and bread she had prepared for me, wrapped up some biscuits in a paper and put them into my bag; then she helped me on with my pelisse and bonnet, and wrapping herself in a shawl, she and I left the nursery. As we passed Mrs. Reed's bedroom, she said, "Will you go in and bid Missis good-bye?"

"No, Bessie: she came to my crib last night when you were gone down to supper, and said I need not disturb her in the morning, or my cousins either; and she told me to remember that she had always been my best friend, and to speak of her and be grateful to her accordingly."

"What did you say, Miss?"

"Nothing: I covered my face with the bed-clothes, and turned from her to the wall."

"That was wrong, Miss Jane."

"It was quite right, Bessie: your Missis has not been my friend: she has been my foe."

"Oh, Miss Jane! don't say so!"

"Good-bye to Gateshead"; cried I, as we passed through the hall and went out at the front door.

The moon was set, and it was very dark; Bessie carried a lantern, whose light glanced on wet steps and gravel road soddened by a recent thaw. Raw and chill was the winter morning: my teeth chattered as I hastened down the drive. There was a light in the porter's lodge; when we reached it, we found the porter's wife just kindling her fire. My trunk, which had been carried down the evening before, stood corded at the door. It wanted but a few minutes of six, and shortly after that hour had struck, the distant roll of wheels announced the coming coach. I went to the door and watched its lamps approach rapidly through the gloom.

"Is she going by herself?" asked the porter's wife.

"Yes."

"And how far is it?"

"Fifty miles."

"What a long way! I wonder Mrs. Reed is not afraid to trust her so far alone."

The coach drew up; there it was at the gates with its four horses and its top laden with passengers: the guard and coachman loudly urged haste; my trunk was hoisted up; I was taken from Bessie's neck, to which I clung with kisses.

"Be sure and take good care of her," cried she to the guard, as he lifted me into the inside.

"Ay, ay!" was the answer: the door was slapped to, a voice exclaimed, "All right," and on we drove. Thus was I severed from Bessie and Gateshead: thus whirled away to unknown, and, as I then deemed, remote and mysterious regions.

[Jane could remember little more of the journey than that it seemed interminable and appeared to cover hundreds of miles. When night came, obliterating the view, she fell asleep. She awoke to find a person dressed like a servant standing at the open coach door.]

"Is there a little girl called Jane Eyre here?" she asked. I answered "Yes," and was then lifted out; my trunk was handed down, and the coach instantly drove away.

I was stiff with long sitting, and bewildered with the noise and

motion of the coach: gathering my faculties, I looked about me. Rain, wind, and darkness filled the air; nevertheless, I dimly discerned a wall before me and a door open in it. Through this door I passed with my new guide: she shut and locked it behind her. There was now visible a house or houses—for the building spread far—with many windows, and lights burning in some; we went up a broad pebbly path, splashing wet, and were admitted at a door; then the servant led me through a passage into a room with a fire, where she left me alone.

I stood and warmed my numbed fingers over the blaze, then I looked round; there was no candle, but the uncertain light from the hearth showed, by intervals, papered walls, carpet, curtains, shining mahogany furniture. It was a parlor, not so spacious or splendid as the drawing-room at Gateshead, but comfortable enough. I was puzzling to make out the subject of a picture on the wall, when the door opened, and an individual carrying a light entered; another followed close behind.

The first was a tall lady with dark hair, dark eyes, and a pale and large forehead; her figure was partly enveloped in a shawl, her countenance was grave, her bearing erect.

"The child is very young to be sent alone," said she, putting her candle down on the table. She considered me attentively for a minute or two, then further added,

"She had better be put to bed soon; she looks tired: are you tired?" she asked, placing her hand on my shoulder.

"A little, ma'am."

"And hungry too, no doubt: let her have some supper before she goes to bed, Miss Miller. Is this the first time you have left your parents to come to school, my little girl?"

I explained to her that I had no parents. She inquired how long they had been dead; then how old I was, what was my name, whether I could read, write, and sew a little: then she touched my cheek gently with her forefinger, and saying she hoped I should be a good child, dismissed me along with Miss Miller.

The lady I had left might be about twenty-nine; the one who went with me appeared some years younger: the first impressed me by her voice, look, and air. Miss Miller was more ordinary; ruddy in complexion, though of a careworn countenance; hurried in gait and action, like one who had always a multiplicity of tasks on hand: she looked, indeed, what I afterwards found she really was, an under-

teacher. Led by her, I passed from compartment to compartment, from passage to passage, of a large and irregular building; till, emerging from the total and somewhat dreary silence pervading that portion of the house we had traversed, we came upon the hum of many voices, and presently entered a wide, long room, with great deal tables, two at each end, on each of which burned a pair of candles, and seated all round on benches, a congregation of girls of every age, from nine or ten to twenty. Seen by the dim lights of the dips, their number to me appeared countless, though not in reality exceeding eighty; they were uniformly dressed in brown stuff frocks of quaint fashion, and long holland pinafores. It was the hour of study; they were engaged in conning over their tomorrow's task, and the hum I had heard was the combined result of their whispered repetitions.

Miss Miller signed to me to sit on a bench near the door, then walking up to the top of the long room, she cried out,

"Monitors, collect the lesson-books and put them away!"

Four tall girls arose from different tables, and going round, gathered the books and removed them. Miss Miller again gave the word of command,

"Monitors, fetch the supper-trays!"

The tall girls went out and returned presently, each bearing a tray, with portions of something, I knew not what, arranged thereon, and a pitcher of water and mug in the middle of each tray. The portions were handed round; those who liked took a draught of the water, the mug being common to all. When it came to my turn, I drank, for I was thirsty, but did not touch the food, excitement and fatigue rendering me incapable of eating. I now saw, however, that it was a thin oaten cake, shared into fragments.

The meal over, prayers were read by Miss Miller, and the classes filed off, two and two, upstairs. Overpowered by this time with weariness, I scarcely noticed what sort of a place the bedroom was; except that, like the schoolroom, I saw it was very long. Tonight I was to be Miss Miller's bedfellow; she helped me to undress: when laid down I glanced at the long rows of beds, each of which was quickly filled with two occupants; in ten minutes the single light was extinguished; amid silence and complete darkness, I fell asleep.

The night passed rapidly: I was too tired even to dream; I only

The night passed rapidly: I was too tired even to dream; I only once awoke to hear the wind rave in furious gusts, and the rain fall in torrents, and to be sensible that Miss Miller had taken her place by my side. When I again unclosed my eyes, a loud bell was ringing:

the girls were up and dressing; day had not yet begun to dawn, and a rushlight or two burned in the room. I too rose reluctantly; it was bitter cold, and I dressed as well as I could for shivering, and washed when there was a basin at liberty, which did not occur soon, as there was but one basin to six girls, on the stands down the middle of the room. Again the bell rang: all formed in file, two and two, and in that order descended the stairs and entered the cold and dimly-lit schoolroom. Here prayers were read by Miss Miller; afterward she called out:

"Form classes!"

A great tumult succeeded for some minutes, during which Miss Miller repeatedly exclaimed, "Silence!" and "Order!" When it subsided, I saw them all drawn up in four semicircles, before four chairs, placed at the four tables; all held books in their hands, and a great book, like a Bible, lay on each table, before the vacant seat. A pause of some seconds succeeded, filled up by the low, vague hum of numbers; Miss Miller walked from class to class, hushing this indefinite sound.

A distant bell tinkled: immediately three ladies entered the room, each walked to a table and took her seat; Miss Miller assumed the fourth vacant chair, which was that nearest the door, and around which the smallest of the children were assembled. To this inferior class I was called, and placed at the bottom of it.

Business now began: the day's Collect was repeated, then certain texts of Scripture were said, and to these succeeded a protracted reading of chapters in the Bible, which lasted an hour. By the time that exercise was terminated, day had fully dawned. The indefatigable bell now sounded for the fourth time: the classes were marshalled and marched into another room to breakfast. How glad I was to behold a prospect of getting something to eat! I was now nearly sick from inanition, having taken so little the day before.

The refectory was a great, low-ceiled, gloomy room; on two long tables smoked basins of something hot, which, however, to my dismay, sent forth an odor far from inviting. I saw a universal manifestation of discontent when the fumes of the repast met the nostrils of those destined to swallow it; from the van of the procession, the tall girls of the first class, rose the whispered words:

"Disgusting! The porridge is burned again!"

"Silence!" ejaculated a voice; not that of Miss Miller, but one of the upper teachers, a little and dark personage, smartly dressed, but of somewhat morose aspect, who installed herself at the top of one table, while a more buxom lady presided at the other. I looked in vain for her I had first seen the night before; she was not visible. Miss Miller occupied the foot of the table where I sat, and a strange, foreign-looking, elderly lady, the French teacher, as I afterward found, took the corresponding seat at the other board. A long grace was said and a hymn sung; then a servant brought in some tea for the teachers, and the meal began.

Ravenous, and now very faint, I devoured a spoonful or two of my portion without thinking of its taste; but the first edge of hunger blunted, I perceived I had got in hand a nauseous mess: burned porridge is almost as bad as rotten potatoes; famine itself soon sickens over it. The spoons were moved slowly: I saw each girl taste her food and try to swallow it; but in most cases the effort was soon relinquished. Breakfast was over, and none had breakfasted. Thanks being returned for what we had not got, and a second hymn chanted, the refectory was evacuated for the schoolroom. I was one of the last to go out, and in passing the tables, I saw one teacher take a basin of the porridge and taste it; she looked at the others; all their countenances expressed displeasure, and one of them, the stout one, whispered:

"Abominable stuff! How shameful!"

A quarter of an hour passed before lessons again began, during which the schoolroom was in a glorious tumult; for that space of time, it seemed to be permitted to talk loud and more freely, and they used their privilege. The whole conversation ran on the breakfast, which one and all abused roundly. Poor things! it was the sole consolation they had. Miss Miller was now the only teacher in the room: a group of great girls standing about her, spoke with serious and sullen gestures. I heard the name of Mr. Brocklehurst pronounced by some lips, at which Miss Miller shook her head disapprovingly; but she made no great effort to check the general wrath: doubtless she shared in it.

A clock in the schoolroom struck nine; Miss Miller left her circle, and standing in the middle of the room, cried:

"Silence! To your seats!"

Discipline prevailed: in five minutes the confused throng was resolved into order, and comparative silence quelled the Babel clamor of tongues. The upper teachers now punctually resumed their posts: but still, all seemed to wait. Ranged on benches down the sides of the

room, the eighty girls sat motionless and erect: a quaint assemblage they appeared, all with plain locks combed from their faces, not a curl visible; in brown dresses, made high and surrounded by a narrow tucker about the throat, with little pockets of holland (shaped something like a Highlander's purse) tied in front of their frocks, and designed to serve the purpose of a work-bag: all too wearing woolen stockings and country-made shoes, fastened with brass buckles. Above twenty of those clad in this costume were full-grown girls, or rather young women; it suited them ill, and gave an air of oddity even to the prettiest.

I was still looking at them, and also at intervals examining the teachers—none of whom precisely pleased me; for the stout one was a little coarse, the dark one not a little fierce, the foreigner harsh and grotesque, and Miss Miller, poor thing! looked purple, weatherbeaten, and over-worked—when, as my eye wandered from face to face, the whole school rose simultaneously, as if moved by a common spring.

What was the matter? I had heard no order given: I was puzzled. Ere I had gathered my wits, the classes were again seated: but as all eyes were now turned to one point, mine followed the general direction, and encountered the personage who had received me last night. She stood at the bottom of the long room, on the hearth; for there was a fire at each end: she surveyed the two rows of girls silently and gravely. Miss Miller approaching, seemed to ask her a question, and having received her answer, went back to her place, and said aloud.

"Monitor of the first class, fetch the globes!"
While the direction was being executed, the lady consulted moved slowly up the room. I suppose I have a considerable organ of Veneration, for I retain yet the sense of admiring awe with which my eyes traced her steps. Seen now, in broad daylight, she looked tall, fair, and shapely; brown eyes, with a benignant light in their irises, and a fine penciling of long lashes round, relieved the whiteness of her large front; on each of her temples her hair, of a very dark brown, was clustered in round curls, according to the fashion of those times, when neither smooth bands nor long ringlets were in vogue; her dress, also in the mode of the day, was of purple cloth, relieved by a sort of Spanish trimming of black velvet; a gold watch (watches were not so common then as now) shone at her girdle. Let the reader add, to complete the picture, refined features; a complexion,

if pale, clear; and a stately air and carriage, and he will have, at least, as clearly as words can give it, a correct idea of the exterior of Miss Temple—Maria Temple, as I afterwards saw the name written in a prayer-book entrusted to me to carry to church.

The superintendent of Lowood (for such was this lady) having taken her seat before a pair of globes placed on one of the tables, summoned the first class round her, and commenced giving a lesson in geography; the lower classes were called by the teachers: repetitions in history, grammar, etc., went on for an hour; writing and arithmetic succeeded, and music lessons were given by Miss Temple to some of the elder girls. The duration of each lesson was measured by the clock, which at last struck twelve. The superintendent rose:

"I have a word to address to the pupils," said she.

The tumult of cessation from lessons was already breaking forth, but it sank at her voice. She went on:

"You had this morning a breakfast which you could not eat; you must be hungry. I have ordered that a lunch of bread and cheese shall be served to all."

The teachers looked at her with a sort of surprise.

"It is to be done on my responsibility," she added, in an explanatory tone to them, and immediately afterwards left the room.

The bread and cheese was presently brought in and distributed, to the high delight and refreshment of the whole school. The order was now given "To the garden!" Each put on a coarse straw bonnet, with strings of colored calico, and a cloak of grey frieze. I was similarly equipped, and, following the stream, I made my way into the open air.

The garden was a wide enclosure, surrounded with walls so high as to exclude every glimpse of prospect; a covered verandah ran down one side, and broad walks bordered a middle space divided into scores of little beds: these beds were assigned as gardens for the pupils to cultivate, and each bed had an owner. When full of flowers they would doubtless look pretty; but now, at the latter end of January, all was wintry blight and brown decay. I shuddered as I stood and looked round me. It was an inclement day for outdoor exercise; not positively rainy, but darkened by a drizzling yellow fog; all underfoot was still soaking wet with the floods of yesterday. The stronger among the girls ran about and engaged in active games, but sundry pale and thin ones herded together for shelter and warmth in the verandah: and among these, as the dense mist penetrated to

their shivering frames, I heard frequently the sound of a hollow cough.

As yet I had spoken to no one, nor did anybody seem to take notice of me. I stood lonely enough: but to that feeling of isolation I was accustomed; it did not oppress me much. I leaned against a pillar of the verandah, drew my grey mantle close about me, and, trying to forget the cold which nipped me without, and the unsatisfied hunger which gnawed me within, delivered myself up to the employment of watching and thinking. My reflections were too undefined and fragmentary to merit record: I hardly yet knew where I was; Gateshead and my past life seemed floated away to an immeasurable distance; the present was vague and strange, and of the future I could form no conjecture. I looked round the convent-like garden, and then up at the house; a large building, half of which seemed grey and old, the other half quite new. The new part, containing the schoolroom and dormitory, was lit by mullioned and latticed windows, which gave it a church-like aspect; a stone tablet over the door, bore this inscription:

"Lowood Institution.—This portion was rebuilt A.D.——, by Naomi Brocklehurst, of Brocklehurst Hall, in this country." "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."—St. Matt. v. 16.

I read these words over and over again: I felt that an explanation belonged to them, and was unable fully to penetrate their import. I was still pondering the signification of "Institution," and endeavoring to make out a connection between the first words and the verse of Scripture, when the sound of a cough close behind me, made me turn my head. I saw a girl sitting on a stone bench near; she had bent over a book, on the perusal of which she seemed intent: from where I stood I could see the title—it was Rasselas, a name that struck me as strange, and consequently attractive. In turning a leaf she happened to look up, and I said to her directly:

"Is your book interesting?" I had already formed the intention of asking her to lend it to me some day.

"I like it," she answered, after a pause of a second or two, during which she examined me.

"What is it about?" I continued. I hardly know where I found the hardihood thus to open a conversation with a stranger; the step was contrary to my nature and habits: but I think her occupation touched a chord of sympathy somewhere; for I too liked reading, though of a frivolous and childish kind. I could not digest or comprehend the serious or substantial.

"You may look at it," replied the girl, offering me the book.

I did so; a brief examination convinced me that the contents were less taking than the title: Rasselas looked dull to my trifling taste; I saw nothing about fairies, nothing about genii; no bright variety seemed spread over the closely-printed pages. I returned it to her; she received it quietly, and without saying anything she was about to relapse into her former studious mood. Again I ventured to disturb her:

"Can you tell me what the writing on that stone over the door means? What is Lowood Institution?"

"This house where you are come to live."

"And why do they call it Institution? Is it in any way different from other schools?"

"It is partly a charity-school: you and I, and all the rest of us, are charity-children. I suppose you are an orphan: are not either your father or your mother dead?"

"Both died before I can remember."

"Well, all the girls here have lost either one or both parents, and this is called an institution for educating orphans."

"Do we pay no money? Do they keep us for nothing?"

"We pay, or our friends pay, fifteen pounds a year for each."

"Then why do they call us charity-children?"

"Because fifteen pounds is not enough for board and teaching, and the deficiency is supplied by subscription."

"Who subscribes?"

"Different benevolent-minded ladies and gentlemen in this neighborhood and in London."

"Who was Naomi Brocklehurst?"

"The lady who built the new part of this house as that tablet records, and whose son overlooks and directs everything here."

"Why?"

"Because he is treasurer and manager of the establishment."

"Then this house does not belong to that tall lady who wears a watch, and who said we were to have some bread and cheese."

"To Miss Temple? Oh, no! I wish it did: she has to answer to Mr. Brocklehurst for all she does. Mr. Brocklehurst buys all our food and all our clothes."

"Does he live here?"

"No-two miles off, at a large hall."

"Is he a good man?"

"He is a clergyman, and is said to do a great deal of good."

"Did you say that tall lady was called Miss Temple?"

"Yes."

"And what are the other teachers called?"

"The one with red cheeks is called Miss Smith; she attends to the work, and cuts out—for we make our own clothes—our frocks, and pelisses, and everything; the little one with black hair is Miss Scatcherd; she teaches history and grammar, and hears the second class repetitions; and the one who wears a shawl, and has a pocket-hand-kerchief tied to her side with a yellow ribbon, is Madame Pierrot: she comes from Lisle, in France, and teaches French."

"Do you like the teachers?"

"Well enough."

"Do you like the little black one, and the Madame——? I cannot pronounce her name as you do."

"Miss Scatcherd is hasty—you must take care not to offend her; Madame Pierrot is not a bad sort of person."

"But Miss Temple is the best-isn't she?"

"Miss Temple is very good, and very clever; she is above the rest, because she knows far more than they do."

"Have you been long here?"

"Two years."

"Are you an orphan?"

"My mother is dead."

"Are you happy here?"

"You ask rather too many questions. I have given you answers enough for the present: now I want to read."

But at that moment the summons sounded for dinner: all reentered the house. The odor which now filled the refectory was scarcely more appetizing than that which had regaled our nostrils at breakfast: the dinner was served in two huge tin-plated vessels, whence rose a strong steam redolent of rancid fat. I found the mess to consist of indifferent potatoes and strange shreds of rusty meat, mixed and cooked together. Of this preparation a tolerably abundant plateful was apportioned to each pupil. I ate what I could, and wondered within myself whether every day's fare would be like this.

After dinner, we immediately adjourned to the schoolroom. Lessons recommenced, and were continued till five o'clock.

Charlotte Brontë

The only marked event of the afternoon was, that I saw the girl with whom I had conversed in the verandah, dismissed in disgrace, by Miss Scatcherd, from a history class, and sent to stand in the middle of the large schoolroom. The punishment seemed to me in a high degree ignominious, especially for so great a girl—she looked thirteen or upward. I expected she would show signs of great distress and shame; but to my surprise she neither wept nor blushed: composed, though grave, she stood, the central mark of all eyes. "How can she bear it so quietly-so firmly?" I asked of myself. "Were I in her place, it seems to me I should wish the earth to open and swallow me up. She looks as if she were thinking of something beyond her punishment—beyond her situation: of something not round nor before her. I have heard of day-dreams—is she in a day-dream now? Her eyes are fixed on the floor, but I am sure they do not see it-her sight seems turned in, gone down into her heart: she is looking at what she can remember, I believe; not at what is really present. I wonder what sort of a girl she is-whether good or naughty."

Soon after five P.M. we had another meal, consisting of a small mug of coffee, and half a slice of brown bread. I devoured my bread and drank my coffee with relish; but I should have been glad of as much more—I was still hungry. Half an hour's recreation succeeded, then study; then the glass of water and the piece of oat-cake, prayers, and bed. Such was my first day at Lowood.

CHAPTER 6

The Next day commenced as before, getting up and dressing by rushlight: but this morning we were obliged to dispense with the ceremony of washing: the water in the pitchers was frozen. A change had taken place in the weather the preceding evening, and a keen northeast wind, whistling through the crevices of our bedroom windows all night long, had made us shiver in our beds, and turned the contents of the ewers to ice.

Before the long hour and a half of prayers and Bible reading was over, I felt ready to perish with cold. Breakfast-time came at last, and this morning the porridge was not burned; the quality was eatable, the quantity small; how small my portion seemed! I wished it had been doubled.

In the course of the day I was enrolled a member of the fourth class, and regular tasks and occupations were assigned me. Hitherto, I had only been a spectator of the proceedings at Lowood, I was now to become an actor therein. At first, being little accustomed to learn by heart, the lessons appeared to me both long and difficult: the frequent change from task to task, too, bewildered me; and I was glad, when, about three o'clock in the afternoon, Miss Smith put into my hands a border of muslin two yards long, together with needle, thimble, etc., and sent me to sit in a quiet corner of the schoolroom, with direction to hem the same. At that hour most of the others were sewing likewise; but one class still stood round Miss Scatcherd's chair reading, and as all was quiet, the subject of their lessons could be heard, together with the manner in which each girl acquitted herself, and the animadversions or commendations of Miss Scatcherd on the performance. It was English history: among the readers, I observed my acquaintance of the verandah: at the commencement of the lesson, her place had been at the top of the class, but for some error of pronunciation or some inattention to stops, she was suddenly sent to the very bottom. Even in that obscure position, Miss Scatcherd continued to make her an object of constant notice: she was continually addressing to her such phrases as the following:

"Burns" (such it seems was her name: the girls here were all called by their surnames, as boys are elsewhere), "Burns, you are standing on the side of your shoe, turn your toes out immediately." "Burns, you poke your chin most unpleasantly, draw it in." "Burns, I insist on your holding your head up; I will not have you before me in that attitude," etc., etc.

A chapter having been read through twice, the books were closed and the girls examined. The lesson had comprised part of the reign of Charles I., and there were sundry questions about tonnage and poundage, and ship-money, which most of them appeared unable to answer; still, every little difficulty was solved instantly when it reached Burns. Her memory seemed to have retained the substance of the whole lesson, and she was ready with answers on every point. I kept expecting that Miss Scatcherd would praise her attention; but, instead of that, she suddenly cried out:

"You dirty, disagreeable girl! you have never cleaned your nails this morning!"

Burns made no answer: I wondered at her silence.

"Why," thought I, "does she not explain that she could neither clean her nails nor wash her face, as the water was frozen?"

My attention was now called off by Miss Smith desiring me to hold a skein of thread: while she was winding it, she talked to me from time to time, asking whether I had ever been at school before, whether I could mark, stitch, knit, etc.; till she dismissed me, I could not pursue my observations on Miss Scatcherd's movements. When I returned to my seat, that lady was just delivering an order, of which I did not catch the import; but Burns immediately left the class, and, going into the small inner room where the books were kept, returned in half a minute, carrying in her hand a bundle of twigs tied together at one end. This ominous tool she presented to Miss Scatcherd with a respectful courtesy; then she quietly, and without being told, unloosed her pinafore, and the teacher instantly and sharply inflicted on her neck a dozen strokes with the bunch of twigs. Not a tear rose to Burns' eye; and, while I paused from my sewing, because my fingers quivered at this spectacle with a sentiment of unavailing and impotent anger, not a feature of her pensive face altered its ordinary expression.

"Hardened girl!" exclaimed Miss Scatcherd; "nothing can correct you of your slatternly habits: carry the rod away."

Burns obeyed; I looked at her narrowly as she emerged from the book-closet; she was just putting back her handkerchief into her pocket, and the trace of a tear glistened on her thin cheek.

The play-hour in the evening I thought the pleasantest fraction of the day at Lowood: the bit of bread, the draught of coffee swallowed at five o'clock had revived vitality, if it had not satisfied hunger; the long restraint of the day was slackened; the schoolroom felt warmer than in the morning—its fires being allowed to burn a little more brightly to supply, in some measure, the place of candles, not yet introduced. The ruddy gloaming, the licensed uproar, the confusion of many voices gave one a welcome sense of liberty.

On the evening of the day on which I had seen Miss Scatcherd flog her pupil, Burns, I wandered as usual among the forms and tables and laughing groups without a companion, yet not feeling lonely: when I passed the windows, I now and then lifted a blind and looked out. It snowed fast, a drift was already forming against the lower panes; putting my ear close to the window, I could distinguish from the gleeful tumult within, the disconsolate moan of the wind outside.

Probably, if I had lately left a good home and kind parents, this would have been the hour when I should most keenly have regretted the separation: that wind would then have saddened my heart; this obscure chaos would have disturbed my peace: as it was, I derived from both a strange excitement, and reckless and feverish, I wished the wind to howl more wildly, the gloom to deepen to darkness, and the confusion to rise to clamor.

Jumping over forms, and creeping under tables, I made my way to one of the fire-places; there, kneeling by the high wire fender, I found Burns, absorbed, silent, abstracted from all round her by the companionship of a book, which she read by the dim glare of the embers.

"It is still Rasselas?" I asked, coming behind her.

"Yes," she said, and I have just finished it."

And in five minutes more she shut it up. I was glad of this.

"Now," thought I, "I can perhaps get her to talk."

I sat down by her on the floor.

"What is your name besides Burns?"

"Helen."

"Do you come a long way from here?"

"I come from a place further north; quite on the borders of Scotland."

"Will you ever go back?"

"I hope so; but nobody can be sure of the future."

"You must wish to leave Lowood?"

"No: why should I? I was sent to Lowood to get an education; and it would be of no use going away until I have attained that object."

"But that teacher, Miss Scatcherd, is so cruel to you?"

"Cruel? Not at all! She is severe: she dislikes my faults."

"And if I were in your place I should dislike her; I should resist her; if she struck me with that rod, I should get it from her hand; I should break it under her nose."

"Probably you would do nothing of the sort: but if you did, Mr. Brocklehurst would expel you from the school; that would be a great grief to your relations. It is far better to endure patiently a smart which nobody feels but yourself, than to commit a hasty action whose evil consequences will extend to all connected with you; and, besides, the Bible bids us return good for evil."

"But then it seems disgraceful to be flogged, and to be sent to stand in the middle of a room full of people; and you are such a great girl. I am far younger than you, and I could not bear it."

"Yet it would be your duty to bear it, if you could not avoid it; it is weak and silly to say you cannot bear what it is your fate to be required to bear."

I heard her with wonder: I could not comprehend this doctrine of endurance; and still less could I understand or sympathize with the forbearance she expressed for her chastiser. Still I felt that Helen Burns considered things by a light invisible to my eyes. I suspected she might be right and I wrong; but I would not ponder the matter deeply: like Felix, I put it off to a more convenient season.

"You say you have faults, Helen: what are they? To me you seem very good."

"Then learn from me not to judge by appearances: I am, as Miss Scatcherd said, slatternly; I seldom put, and never keep, things in order; I am careless; I forget rules; I read when I should learn my lessons; I have no method; and sometimes I say, like you, I cannot bear to be subjected to systematic arrangements. This is all very provoking to Miss Scatcherd, who is naturally neat, punctual, and particular."

"And cross and cruel," I added; but Helen Burns would not admit my addition; she kept silence.

"Is Miss Temple as severe to you as Miss Scatcherd?"

At the utterance of Miss Temple's name, a soft smile flitted over her grave face.

"Miss Temple is full of goodness: it pains her to be severe to anyone, even the worst in the school: she sees my errors, and tells me of them gently; and, if I do anything worthy of praise, she gives me my meed liberally. One strong proof of my wretchedly defective nature is, that even her expostulations, so mild, so rational, have no influence to cure me of my faults; and even her praise, though I value it most highly, cannot stimulate me to continued care and foresight."

"That is curious," said I, "it is so easy to be careful."

"For you I have no doubt it is. I observed you in your class this morning, and saw you were closely attentive: your thoughts never seemed to wander while Miss Miller explained the lesson and questioned you. Now, mine continually rove away. When I should be listening to Miss Scatcherd, and collecting all she says with assiduity, often I lose the very sound of her voice; I fall into a sort of dream.

Sometimes I think I am in Northumberland, and that the noises I hear round me are the bubbling of a little brook which runs through Deepden, near our house; then, when it comes to my turn to reply, I have to be wakened; and, having heard nothing of what was read for listening to the visionary brook, I have no answer ready."

"Yet how well you replied this afternoon."

"It was mere chance: the subject on which we had been reading had interested me. This afternoon, instead of dreaming of Deepden, I was wondering how a man who wished to do right could act so unjustly and unwisely as Charles the First sometimes did; and I thought what a pity it was that, with his integrity and conscientiousness, he could see no farther than the prerogatives of the crown. If he had but been able to look to a distance, and see how what they call the spirit of the age was tending! Still, I like Charles—I respect him—I pity him, poor murdered king! Yes, his enemies were the worst: they shed blood they had no right to shed. How dared they kill him!"

Helen was talking to herself now: she had forgotten I could not very well understand her—that I was ignorant, or nearly so, of the subject she discussed. I recalled her to my level.

"And when Miss Temple teaches you, do your thoughts wander then?"

"No, certainly, not often; because Miss Temple has generally something to say which is newer than my own reflections: her language is singularly agreeable to me, and the information she communicates is often just what I wished to gain."

"Well, then, with Miss Temple you are good?"

"Yes, in a passive way: I make no effort; I follow as inclination guides me. There is no merit in such goodness."

"A great deal: you are good to those who are good to you. It is all I ever desire to be. If people were always kind and obedient to those who are cruel and unjust, the wicked people would have it all their own way: they would never feel afraid, and so they would never alter, but would grow worse and worse. When we are struck at without a reason, we should strike back again very hard; I am sure we should —so hard as to teach the person who struck us never to do it again."

"You will change your mind, I hope, when you grow older: as yet you are but a little untaught girl."

"But I feel this, Helen: I must dislike those who, whatever I do to please them, persist in disliking me; I must resist those who punish me unjustly. It is as natural as that I should love those who show

me affection, or submit to punishment when I feel it is deserved."
"Heathens and savage tribes hold that doctrine; but Christians and civilized nations disown it. . . ."

CHAPTER 7

ONE AFTERNOON (I had then been three weeks at Lowood), as I was sitting with a slate in my hand, puzzling over a sum in long division, my eyes, raised in abstraction to the window, caught sight of a figure just passing. I recognized almost instinctively that gaunt outline; and when, two minutes after, all the school, teachers included, rose en masse, it was not necessary for me to look up in order to ascertain whose entrance they thus greeted. A long stride measured the schoolroom, and presently beside Miss Temple, who herself had risen, stood the same black column which had frowned on me so ominously from the hearth-rug of Gateshead. I now glanced sideways at this piece of architecture. Yes, I was right: it was Mr. Brocklehurst, buttoned up in a surtout, and looking longer, narrower, and more rigid than ever.

I had my own reasons for being dismayed at this apparition: too well I remembered the perfidious hints given by Mrs. Reed about my disposition, etc.; the promise pledged by Mr. Brocklehurst to apprise Miss Temple and the teachers of my vicious nature. All along I had been dreading the fulfilment of this promise, I had been looking out daily for the "Coming Man," whose information respecting my past life and conversation was to brand me as a bad child for ever: now there he was. He stood at Miss Temple's side; he was speaking low in her ear. I did not doubt he was making disclosures of my villainy; and I watched her eye with painful anxiety, expecting every moment to see its dark orb turn on me a glance of repugnance and contempt. I listened too; and as I happened to be seated quite at the top of the room, I caught most of what he said: its import relieved me from immediate apprehension.

"I suppose, Miss Temple, the thread I bought at Lowton will do; it struck me that it would be just of the quality for the calico chemises, and I sorted the needles to match. You may tell Miss Smith that I forgot to make a memorandum of the darning needles, but she shall have some papers sent in next week; and she is not, on any account,

to give out more than one at a time to each pupil: if they have more, they are apt to be careless and lose them. And, oh ma'am! I wish the woolen stockings were better looked to! When I was here last, I went into the kitchen-garden and examined the clothes drying on the line; there was a quantity of black hose in a very bad state of repair. From the size of the holes in them I was sure they had not been wellmended from time to time."

He paused.

"Your directions shall be attended to, sir," said Miss Temple.
"And, ma'am," he continued, "the laundress tells me some of the girls have two clean tuckers in the week; it is too much; the rules limit them to one."

"I think I can explain that circumstance, sir. Agnes and Catherine Johnstone were invited to take tea with some friends at Lowton last Thursday, and I gave them leave to put on clean tuckers for the occasion."

Mr. Brocklehurst nodded.

"Well, for once it may pass; but please not to let the circumstance occur too often. And there is another thing which surprised me. I find, in settling accounts with the housekeeper, that a lunch, consisting of bread and cheese, has twice been served out to the girls during the past fortnight. How is this? I look over the regulations, and I find no such meal as lunch mentioned. Who introduced this innovation? and by what authority?"

"I must be responsible for the circumstance, sir," replied Miss Temple: "the breakfast was so ill-prepared that the pupils could not possibly eat it; and I dared not allow them to remain fasting till dinner time."

"Madam, allow me an instant. You are aware that my plan in bringing up these girls is, not to accustom them to habits of luxury and indulgence, but to render them hardy, patient, self-denying. Should any little accidental disappointment of the appetite occur, such as the spoiling of a meal, the under or the over dressing of a dish, the incident ought not to be neutralized by replacing with something more delicate the comfort lost, thus pampering the body and obviating the aim of this institution; it ought to be improved to the spiritual edification of the pupils, by encouraging them to evince fortitude under the temporary privation. A brief address on those occasions would not be mistimed, wherein a judicious instructor would take the opportunity of referring to the sufferings of the primitive Christians; to the torments of martyrs; to the exhortations of our blessed Lord himself, calling upon his disciples to take up their cross and follow him; to his warnings that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God; to his divine consolations, 'if ye suffer hunger or thirst for my sake, happy are ye.' Oh, madam, when you put bread and cheese, instead of burned porridge, into these children's mouths, you may indeed feed their vile bodies, but you little think how you starve their immortal souls!"

Mr. Brocklehurst again paused—perhaps overcome by his feelings. Miss Temple had looked down when he first began to speak to her; but she now gazed straight before her, and her face, naturally pale as marble, appeared to be assuming also the coldness and fixity of that material; especially her mouth, closed as if it would have required a sculptor's chisel to open it, and her brow settled gradually into petrified severity.

Meantime, Mr. Brocklehurst, standing on the hearth with his hands behind his back, majestically surveyed the whole school. Suddenly his eye gave a blink, as if it had met something that either dazzled or shocked its pupil; turning, he said in more rapid accents than he had hitherto used:

"Miss Temple, Miss Temple, what—what is that girl with curled hair? Red hair, ma'am, curled—curled all over?" And extending his cane he pointed to the awful object, his hand shaking as he did so.

"It is Julia Severn," replied Miss Temple, very quietly.

"Julia Severn, ma'am! And why has she, or any other, curled hair? Why, in defiance of every precept and principle of this house, does she conform to the world so openly—here in an evangelical, charitable establishment—as to wear her hair one mass of curls?"

"Julia's hair curls naturally," returned Miss Temple, still more quietly.

"Naturally! Yes, but we are not to conform to nature: I wish these girls to be the children of Grace: and why that abundance? I have again and again intimated that I desire the hair to be arranged closely, modestly, plainly. Miss Temple, that girl's hair must be cut off entirely. I will send a barber tomorrow: and I see others who have far too much of the excrescence—that tall girl, tell her to turn round. Tell all the first form to rise up and direct their faces to the wall."

Miss Temple passed her handkerchief over her lips, as if to

smooth away the involuntary smile that curled them; she gave the order, however, and when the first class could take in what was required of them, they obeyed. Leaning a little back on my bench, I could see the looks and grimaces with which they commented on this maneuver. It was a pity Mr. Brocklehurst could not see them too; he would perhaps have felt that, whatever he might do with the outside of the cup and platter, the inside was further beyond his interference than he imagined.

He scrutinized the reverse of these living medals some five minutes, then pronounced sentence. These words fell like the knell of doom:

"All those top-knots must be cut off."

Miss Temple seemed to remonstrate.

"Madam," he pursued, "I have a Master to serve whose kingdom is not of this world. My mission is to mortify in these girls the lusts of the flesh; to teach them to clothe themselves with shame-facedness and sobriety, not with braided hair and costly apparel; and each of the young persons before us has a string of hair twisted in plaits which vanity itself might have woven: these, I repeat, must be cut off; think of the time wasted, of——"

Mr. Brocklehurst was here interrupted. Three other visitors, ladies, now entered the room. They ought to have come a little sooner to have heard his lecture on dress, for they were splendidly attired in velvet, silk, and furs. The two younger of the trio (fine girls of sixteen and seventeen) had grey beaver hats, then in fashion, shaded with ostrich plumes, and from under the brim of this graceful head-dress fell a profusion of light tresses, elaborately curled; the elderly lady was enveloped in a costly velvet shawl, trimmed with ermine, and she wore a false front of French curls.

These ladies were deferentially received by Miss Temple, as Mrs. and Misses Brocklehurst, and conducted to seats of honor at the top of the room. They . . . had been conducting a rummaging scrutiny of the rooms upstairs. They now proceeded to direct divers remarks and reproofs to Miss Smith . . . but I had no time to listen to what they said. . . .

Hitherto, while gathering up the discourse of Mr. Brocklehurst and Miss Temple, I had not, at the same time, neglected precautions to secure my personal safety; which I thought would be effected, if I could only elude observation. To this end, I had sat well back on the form, and while seeming to be busy with my sum, had

held my slate in such a manner as to conceal my face. I might have escaped notice, had not my treacherous slate somehow happened to slip from my hand, and falling with an obtrusive crash, directly drawn every eye upon me; I knew it was all over now, and, as I stooped to pick up the two fragments of slate, I rallied my forces for the worst. It came.

"A careless girl!" said Mr. Brocklehurst, and immediately after—
"It is the new pupil, I perceive." And before I could draw breath,
"I must not forget I have a word to say respecting her." Then aloud:
how loud it seemed to me! "Let the child who broke her slate, come
forward!"

Of my own accord, I could not have stirred; I was paralyzed: but the two great girls who sat on each side of me, set me on my legs and pushed me toward the dread judge, and then Miss Temple gently assisted me to his very feet, and I caught her whispered counsel,

"Don't be afraid, Jane, I saw it was an accident; you shall not be punished."

The kind whisper went to my heart like a dagger.

"Another minute, and she will despise me for a hypocrite," thought I; and an impulse of fury against Reed, Brocklehurst, and Co. bounded in my pulses at the conviction. I was no Helen Burns.

"Fetch that stool," said Mr. Brocklehurst, pointing to a very high one from which a monitor had just risen; it was brought.

"Place the child upon it."

And I was placed there, by whom I don't know: I was in no condition to note particulars; I was only aware that they had hoisted me up to the height of Mr. Brocklehurst's nose, that he was within a yard of me, and that a spread of shot orange and purple silk pelisses, and a cloud of silvery plumage extended and waved below me.

Mr. Brocklehurst hemmed.

"Ladies," said he, turning to his family; "Miss Temple, teachers, and children, you all see this girl?"

Of course they did; for I felt their eyes directed like burning-glasses against my scorched skin.

"You see she is yet voung; you observe she possesses the ordinary form of childhood; God has graciously given her the shape that He has given to all of us; no signal deformity points her out as a marked character. Who would think that the Evil One had already found a servant and agent in her? Yet such, I grieve to say, is the case."

A pause—in which I began to steady the palsy of my nerves, and to feel that the Rubicon was passed; and that the trial, no longer to

to feel that the Rubicon was passed; and that the trial, no longer to be shirked, must be firmly sustained.

"My dear children," pursued the black marble clergyman, with pathos, "this is a sad, a melancholy occasion; for it becomes my duty to warn you, that this girl, who might be one of God's own lambs, is a little castaway: not a member of the true flock, but evidently an interloper and an alien. You must be on your guard against her; you must shun her example: if necessary, avoid her company, exclude her from your sports, and shut her out from your converse. Teachers, you must watch her: keep your eyes on her movements, weigh well her words, scrutinize her actions, punish her body to save her soul; if indeed, such salvation be possible for (my movements, weigh well her words, scrutinize her actions, punish her body to save her soul: if, indeed, such salvation be possible, for (my tongue falters while I tell it) this girl, this child, the native of a Christian land, worse than many a little heathen who says its prayers to Brahma and kneels before Juggernaut—this girl is—a liar!"

Now came a pause of ten minutes; during which I, by this time in perfect possession of my wits, observed all the female Brocklehursts produce their pocket-handkerchiefs and apply them to their optics, while the elderly lady swayed herself to and fro, and the two younger ones whispered, "How shocking!"

Mr. Brocklehurst resumed

Mr. Brocklehurst resumed.

"This I learned from her benefactress; from the pious and charitable lady who adopted her in her orphan state, reared her as her own daughter, and whose kindness, whose generosity the unhappy girl repaid by an ingratitude so bad, so dreadful, that at last her excellent patroness was obliged to separate her from her own young ones, fear-ful lest her vicious example should contaminate their purity: she has sent her here to be healed, even as the Jews of old sent their diseased to the troubled pool of Bethesda; and, teachers, superintendent, I beg of you not to allow the waters to stagnate round her."

With this sublime conclusion, Mr. Brocklehurst adjusted the top button of his surtout, muttered something to his family, who rose, bowed to Miss Temple, and then all the great people sailed in state from the room. Turning at the door, my judge said:

"Let her stand half an hour longer on that stool, and let no one speak to her during the remainder of the day."

There was I, then, mounted aloft. I, who had said I could not bear the shame of standing on my natural feet in the middle of the room, was now exposed to general view on a pedestal of infamy.

Charlotte Brontë

What my sensations were, no language can describe; but just as they all arose, stifling my breath and constricting my throat, a girl came up and passed me: in passing, she lifted her eyes. What a strange light inspired them! What an extraordinary sensation that ray sent through me! How the new feeling bore me up! It was as if a martyr, a hero, had passed a slave or victim, and imparted strength in the transit. I mastered the rising hysteria, lifted up my head, and took a firm stand on the stool. Helen Burns asked some slight question about her work of Miss Smith, was chidden for the triviality of the inquiry, returned to her place, and smiled at me as she again went by. What a smile! I remember it now, and I know that it was the effluence of fine intellect, of true courage; it lit up her marked lineaments, her thin face, her sunken grey eye, like a reflection from the aspect of an angel. Yet at that moment Helen Burns wore on her arm "the untidy badge"; scarcely an hour ago I had heard her condemned by Miss Scatcherd to a dinner of bread and water on the morrow, because she had blotted an exercise in copying it out. Such is the imperfect nature of man! such spots are there on the disc of the clearest planet; and eyes like Miss Scatcherd's can only see those minute defects, and are blind to the full brightness of the orb.

CHAPTER 8

RE THE HALF-HOUR ENDED, five o'clock struck; school was dismissed, and all were gone into the refectory to tea. I now ventured to descend: it was deep dusk; I retired into a corner and sat down on the floor. The spell by which I had been so far supported began to dissolve; reaction took place, and soon, so overwhelming was the grief that seized me, I sank prostrate with my face to the ground. Now I wept. Helen Burns was not here; nothing sustained me; left to myself I abandoned myself, and my tears watered the boards. I had meant to be so good, and to do so much at Lowood: to make so many friends, to earn respect, and win affection. Already I had made visible progress: that very morning I had reached the head of my class; Miss Miller had praised me warmly; Miss Temple had smiled approbation; she had promised to teach me drawing, and to let me learn French, if I continued to make similar improvement two months

longer: and then I was well-received by my fellow-pupils; treated as an equal by those of my own age, and not molested by any; now, here I lay again crushed and trodden on; and could I ever rise more?

"Never," I thought; and ardently I wished to die. While sobbing out this wish in broken accents, some one approached: I started up—again Helen Burns was near me; the fading fires just showed her coming up the long, vacant room; she brought my coffee and bread.

"Come, eat something," she said; but I put both away from me, feeling as if a drop or a crumb would have choked me in my present condition. Helen regarded me, probably with surprise: I could not now abate my agitation, though I tried hard; I continued to weep aloud. She sat down on the ground near me, embraced her knees with her arms, and rested her head upon them; in that attitude she remained silent as an Indian. I was the first who spoke:

"Helen, why do you stay with a girl whom everybody believes to be a liar?"

"Everybody, Jane? Why, there are only eighty people who have heard you called so, and the world contains hundreds of millions."

"But what have I to do with millions? The eighty I know despise me."

"Jane, you are mistaken: probably not one in the school either despises or dislikes you; many, I am sure, pity you much."

"How can they pity me after what Mr. Brocklehurst said?"

"Mr. Brocklehurst is not a god: nor is he even a great and admired man: he is little liked here; he never took steps to make himself liked. Had he treated you as an especial favorite, you would have found enemies, declared or covert, all around you; as it is, the greater number would offer you sympathy if they dared. Teachers and pupils may look coldly on you for a day or two, but friendly feelings are concealed in their hearts; and if you persevere in doing well, these feelings will ere long appear so much the more evidently for their temporary suppression. Besides, Jane,"——she paused.

"Well, Helen?" said I, putting my hand into hers. She chafed my fingers gently to warm them, and went on:

"If all the world hated you, and believed you wicked, while your

"If all the world hated you, and believed you wicked, while your own conscience approved you, and absolved you from guilt, you would not be without friends."

"No; I know I should think well of myself; but that is not enough. If others don't love me, I would rather die than live—I cannot bear

to be solitary and hated, Helen. Look here; to gain some real affection from you, or Miss Temple, or any other whom I truly love, I would willingly submit to have the bone of my arm broken, or to let a bull toss me, or to stand behind a kicking horse, and let it dash its hoof at my chest——"

"Hush, Jane! you think too much of the love of human beings; you are too impulsive, too vehement: the sovereign hand that created your frame, and put life into it, has provided you with other resources than your feeble self, or than creatures feeble as you. Besides this earth, and besides the race of men, there is an invisible world and a kingdom of spirits: that world is round us, for it is everywhere; and those spirits watch us, for they are commissioned to guard us; and if we were dying in pain and shame, if scorn smote us on all sides, and hatred crushed us, angels see our tortures, recognize our innocence (if innocent we be: as I know you are of this charge which Mr. Brocklehurst has weakly and pompously repeated at second-hand from Mrs. Reed; for I read a sincere nature in your ardent eyes and on your clear front), and God waits only the separation of spirit from flesh to crown us with a full reward. Why, then, should we ever sink overwhelmed with distress, when life is so soon over, and death is so certain an entrance to happiness—to glory?"

I was silent: Helen had calmed me; but in the tranquillity she imparted there was an alloy of inexpressible sadness. I felt the impression of woe as she spoke, but I could not tell whence it came; and when, having done speaking, she breathed a little fast and coughed a short cough, I momentarily forgot my own sorrows to yield to a vague concern for her.

Resting my head on Helen's shoulder, I put my arms round her waist; she drew me to her, and we reposed in silence. We had not sat long thus, when another person came in. Some heavy clouds, swept from the sky by a rising wind, had left the moon bare; and her light, streaming in through a window near, shone full both on us and on the approaching figure, which we at once recognized as Miss Temple.

"I came on purpose to find you, Jane Eyre," said she; "I want you in my room; and as Helen Burns is with you, she may come too."

We went; following the superintendent's guidance, we had to thread some intricate passages, and mount a staircase before we reached her apartment; it contained a good fire, and looked cheer-

ful. Miss Temple told Helen Burns to be seated in a low arm-chair on one side of the hearth, and herself taking another, she called me to her side.

"Is it all over?" she asked, looking down at my face. "Have you cried your grief away?"

"I am afraid I never shall do that."

"Why?"

"Because I have been wrongly accused; and you, ma'am, and everybody else will now think me wicked."

"We shall think you what you prove yourself to be, my child. Continue to act as a good girl, and you will satisfy me."

"Shall I, Miss Temple?"

"You will," said she, passing her arm round me. "And now tell me who is the lady whom Mr. Brocklehurst called your benefactress?"

"Mrs. Reed, my uncle's wife. My uncle is dead, and he left me to her care."

"Did she not, then, adopt you of her own accord?"

"No, ma'am; she was sorry to have to do it: but my uncle, as I have often heard the servants say, got her to promise before he died, that she would always keep me."

"Well now, Jane, you know, or at least I will tell you, that when a criminal is accused, he is always allowed to speak in his own defense. You have been charged with falsehood; defend yourself to me as well as you can. Say whatever your memory suggests as true; but add nothing and exaggerate nothing."

I resolved, in the depth of my heart, that I would be most moderate—most correct; and, having reflected a few minutes in order to arrange coherently what I had to say, I told her all the story of my sad childhood. Exhausted by emotion, my language was more subdued than it generally was when it developed that sad theme; and mindful of Helen's warnings against the indulgence of resentment, I infused into the narrative far less gall and wormwood than ordinary. Thus restrained and simplified, it sounded more credible. I felt as I went on that Miss Temple fully believed me.

In the course of the tale I had mentioned Mr. Lloyd as having come to see me after the fit: for I never forgot the, to me, frightful episode of the red room; in detailing which, my excitement was sure, in some degree, to break bounds; for nothing could soften in my recollection the spasm of agony which clutched my heart when Mrs.

Reed spurned my wild supplication for pardon, and locked me a second time in the dark and haunted chamber.

I had finished. Miss Temple regarded me a few minutes in silence; she then said—

"I know something of Mr. Lloyd; I shall write to him; if his reply agrees with your statement, you shall be publicly cleared from every imputation. To me, Jane, you are clear now."

She kissed me, and still keeping me at her side (where I was well contented to stand, for I derived a child's pleasure from the contemplation of her face, her dress, her one or two ornaments, her white forehead, her clustered and shining curls, and beaming dark eyes), she proceeded to address Helen Burns.

"How are you to-night, Helen? Have you coughed much today?"
"Not quite so much I think, ma'am."

"And the pain in your chest?"

"It is a little better."

Miss Temple got up, took her hand and examined her pulse; then she returned to her own seat. As she resumed it, I heard her sigh low. She was pensive a few minutes, then rousing herself, she said cheerfully:

"But you two are my visitors to-night; I must treat you as such." She rang her bell.

"Barbara," she said to the servant who answered it, "I have not yet had tea; bring the tray, and place cups for these two young ladies."

And a tray was soon brought. How pretty, to my eyes, did the china and bright teapot look, placed on the little round table near the fire! How fragrant was the steam of the beverage, and the scent of the toast! of which, however, I, to my dismay (for I was beginning to be hungry), discerned only a very small portion. Miss Temple discerned it too:

"Barbara," said she, "can you not bring a little more bread and butter? There is not enough for three.".

Barbara went out: she returned soon:

"Madam, Mrs. Harden says she has sent up the usual quantity."

Mrs. Harden, be it observed, was the housekeeper, a woman after Mr. Brocklehurst's own heart, made up of equal parts of whalebone and iron.

"Oh, very well!" returned Miss Temple; "we must make it do, Barbara, I suppose." And as the girl withdrew, she added, smiling,

"Fortunately, I have it in my power to supply deficiencies for this once."

Having invited Helen and me to approach the table, and placed before each of us a cup of tea with one delicious but thin morsel of toast, she got up, unlocked a drawer, and taking from it a parcel wrapped in paper, disclosed presently to our eyes a good-sized seedcake.

"I meant to give each of you some of this to take with you," said she; "but as there is so little toast, you must have it now," and she proceeded to cut slices with a generous hand.

We feasted that evening as on nectar and ambrosia; and not the least delight of the entertainment was the smile of gratification with which our hostess regarded us, as we satisfied our famished appetites on the delicate fare she liberally supplied. Tea over and the tray removed, she again summoned us to the fire; we sat one on each side of her, and now a conversation followed between her and Helen, which it was indeed a privilege to be admitted to hear.

Miss Temple had always something of serenity in her air, of state in her mien, of refined propriety in her language, which precluded deviation into the ardent, the excited, the eager: something which chastened the pleasure of those who looked on her and listened to her, by a controlling sense of awe; and such was my feeling now. But as to Helen Burns, I was struck with wonder.

The refreshing meal, the brilliant fire, the presence and kindness of her beloved instructress, or, perhaps, more than all these, something in her own unique mind, had roused her powers within her. They woke, they kindled: first, they glowed in the bright tint of her cheek, which till this hour I had never seen but pale and bloodless; then they shone in the liquid luster of her eyes, which had suddenly acquired a beauty more singular than that of Miss Temple's—a beauty neither of fine color nor long eyelash, nor penciled brow, but of meaning, of movement, of radiance. Then her soul sat on her lips, and language flowed, from what source I cannot tell: has a girl of fourteen a heart large enough, vigorous enough to hold the swelling spring of pure, full, fervid eloquence? Such was the characteristic of Helen's discourse on that, to me, memorable evening; her spirit seemed hastening to live within a very brief span as much as many live during a protracted existence.

They conversed of things I had never heard of! of nations and times past; of countries far away: of secrets of nature discovered or

guessed at: they spoke of books: how many they had read! What stores of knowledge they possessed! Then they seemed so familiar with French names and French authors: but my amazement reached its climax when Miss Temple asked Helen if she sometimes snatched a moment to recall the Latin her father had taught her, and taking a book from a shelf, bade her read and construe a page of Vergil; and Helen obeyed, my organ of Veneration expanding at every sounding line. She had scarcely finished ere the bell announced bedtime: no delay could be admitted; Miss Temple embraced us both, saying, as she drew us to her heart:

"God bless you, my children!"

Helen she held a little longer than me: she let her go more reluctantly; it was Helen her eye followed to the door; it was for her she a second time breathed a sad sigh; for her she wiped a tear from her cheek.

On reaching the bedroom, we heard the voice of Miss Scatcherd: she was examining drawers; she had just pulled out Helen Burns's, and when we entered Helen was greeted with a sharp reprimand, and told that tomorrow she should have half a dozen of untidily folded articles pinned to her shoulder.

"My things were indeed in shameful disorder," murmured Helen to me, in a low voice: "I intended to have arranged them, but I forgot."

Next morning, Miss Scatcherd wrote in conspicuous characters on a piece of pasteboard the word "Slattern," and bound it like a phylactery round Helen's large, mild, intelligent, and benign-looking forehead. She wore it till evening, patient, unresentful, regarding it as a deserved punishment. The moment Miss Scatcherd withdrew after afternoon-school, I ran to Helen, tore it off, and thrust it into the fire. The fury of which she was incapable had been burning in my soul all day, and tears, hot and large, had continually been scalding my cheek; for the spectacle of her sad resignation gave me an intolerable pain at the heart.

About a week subsequently to the incidents above narrated, Miss Temple, who had written to Mr. Lloyd, received his answer; it appeared that what he said went to corroborate my account. Miss Temple, having assembled the whole school, announced that inquiry had been made into the charges alleged against Jane Eyre, and that she was most happy to be able to pronounce her completely cleared from every imputation. The teachers then shook hands with me and

kissed me, and a murmur of pleasure ran through the ranks of my companions.

Thus relieved of a grievous load, I from that hour set to work afresh, resolved to pioneer my way through every difficulty: I toiled hard, and my success was proportionate to my efforts; my memory, not naturally tenacious, improved with practice; exercise sharpened my wits; in a few weeks I was promoted to a higher class; in less than two months I was allowed to commence French and drawing. . . .

I would not now have exchanged Lowood with all its privations, for Gateshead and its daily luxuries.

CHAPTER 9

 ${\bf B}^{\rm UT}$ THE PRIVATIONS, or rather the hardships, of Lowood lessened. Spring drew on, she was indeed already come; the frosts of winter had ceased; its snows were melted, its cutting winds ameliorated. . . .

April advanced to May: a bright, serene May it was; days of blue sky, placid sunshine, and soft western or southern gales filled up its duration. And now vegetation matured with vigor; Lowood shook loose its tresses; it became all green, all flowery; its great elm, ash, and oak skeletons were restored to majestic life; woodland plants sprang up profusely in its recesses; unnumbered varieties of moss filled its hollows, and it made a strange ground-sunshine out of the wealth of its wild primrose plants: I have seen their pale gold gleam in overshadowed spots like scatterings of the sweetest luster. All this I enjoyed often and fully, free, unwatched, and almost alone; for this unwonted liberty and pleasure there was a cause, to which it now becomes my task to advert.

Have I not described a pleasant site for a dwelling, when I speak of it as bosomed in hill and wood, and rising from the verge of a stream? Assuredly, pleasant enough: but whether healthy or not is another question.

That forest-dell, where Lowood lay, was the cradle of fog and fogbred pestilence; which, quickening with the quickening spring, crept into the Orphan Asylum, breathed typhus through its crowded school-room and dormitory, and, ere May arrived, transformed the seminary into an hospital.

Semi-starvation and neglected colds had predisposed most of the pupils to receive infection: forty-five out of the eighty girls lay ill at one time. Classes were broken up, rules relaxed. The few who continued well were allowed almost unlimited license; because the medical attendant insisted on the necessity of frequent exercise to keep them in health: and had it been otherwise, no one had leisure to watch or restrain them. Miss Temple's whole attention was absorbed by the patients: she lived in the sick-room, never quitting it except to snatch a few hours' rest at night. The teachers were fully occupied with packing up and making other necessary preparations for the departure of those girls who were fortunate enough to have friends and relations able and willing to remove them from the seat of contagion. Many, already smitten, went home only to die; some died at the school, and were buried quietly and quickly, the nature of the malady forbidding delay.

While disease had thus become an inhabitant of Lowood, and death its frequent visitor; while there was gloom and fear within its walls; while its rooms and passages steamed with hospital smells, the drug and the pastille striving vainly to overcome the effluvia of mortality, that bright May shone unclouded over the bold hills and beautiful woodland out of doors. Its garden, too, glowed with flowers: hollyhocks had sprung up tall as trees, lilies had opened, tulips and roses were in bloom; the borders of the little beds were gay with pink thrift and crimson double-daisies; the sweet-briars gave out, morning and evening, their scent of spice and apples; and these fragrant treasures were all useless for most of the inmates of Lowood, except to furnish now and then a handful of herbs and blossoms to put in a coffin.

But I, and the rest who continued well, enjoyed fully the beauties of the scene and season: they let us ramble in the wood, like gypsies, from morning till night; we did what we liked, went where we liked: we lived better too. Mr. Brocklehurst and his family never came near Lowood now: household matters were not scrutinized into: the cross housekeeper was gone, driven away by the fear of infection; her successor, who had been matron at the Lowton Dispensary, unused to the ways of her new abode, provided with comparative liberality. Besides, there were fewer to feed: the sick could eat little; our breakfast-basins were better filled: when there was no time to prepare a regular

dinner, which often happened, she would give us a large piece of cold pie, or a thick slice of bread and cheese, and this we carried away with us to the wood, where we each chose the spot we liked best, and dined sumptuously.

My favorite seat was a smooth and broad stone, rising white and dry from the very middle of the beck, and only to be got at by wading through the water; a feat I accomplished barefoot. The stone was just broad enough to accommodate, comfortably, another girl and me, at that time my chosen comrade—one Mary Ann Wilson; a shrewd observant personage, whose society I took pleasure in, partly because she was witty and original, and partly because she had a manner which set me at my ease. Some years older than I, she knew more of the world, and could tell me many things I liked to hear. With her my curiosity found gratification: to my faults also she gave ample indulgence, never imposing curb or rein on anything I said. She had a turn for narrative, I for analysis; she liked to inform, I to question; so we got on swimmingly together, deriving much entertainment, if not much improvement, from our mutual intercourse.

And where, meantime, was Helen Burns? Why did I not spend these sweet days of liberty with her? Had I forgotten her? or was I so worthless as to have grown tired of her pure society? Surely the Mary Ann Wilson I have mentioned was inferior to my first acquaintance: she could only tell me amusing stories, and reciprocate any racy and pungent gossip I chose to indulge in; while, if I have spoken truth of Helen, she was qualified to give those who enjoyed the privilege of her converse, a taste of far higher things.

I knew and felt this: and though I am a defective being, with many faults and few redeeming points, yet I never tired of Helen Burns; nor ever ceased to cherish for her a sentiment of attachment, as strong, tender, and respectiful as any that ever animated my heart. How could it be otherwise, when Helen, at all times and under all circumstances, evinced for me a quiet and faithful friendship, which ill-humor never soured, nor irritation ever troubled? But Helen was ill at present: for some weeks she had been removed from my sight to I knew not what room upstairs. She was not, I was told, in the hospital portion of the house with the fever patients; for her complaint was consumption, not typhus: and by consumption I, in my ignorance, understood something mild, which time and care would be sure to alleviate.

I was confirmed in this idea by the fact of her once or twice coming

downstairs on very warm sunny afternoons, and being taken by Miss Temple into the garden: but, on these occasions, I was not allowed to go and speak to her; I only saw her from the schoolroom window, and then not distinctly; for she was much wrapped up, and sat at a distance under the verandah.

One evening, in the beginning of June, I had stayed out very late with Mary Ann in the wood; we had, as usual, separated ourselves from the others, and had wandered far: so far that we lost our way, and had to ask it at a lonely cottage, where a man and woman lived, who looked after a herd of half-wild swine that fed on the mast in the wood. When we got back, it was after moon-rise: a pony, which we knew to be the surgeon's, was standing at the garden door. Mary Ann remarked that she supposed someone must be very ill, as Mr. Bates had been sent for at that time of the evening. She went into the house; I stayed behind a few minutes to plant in my garden a handful of roots I had dug up in the forest, and which I feared would wither if I left them till the morning. This done, I lingered yet a little longer. The flowers smelled so sweet as the dew fell; it was such a pleasant evening, so serene, so warm; the still glowing west promised so fairly another fine day on the morrow; the moon rose with such majesty in the grave east. I was noting these things and enjoying them as a child might, when it entered my mind as it had never done before:

"How sad to be lying now on a sick bed, and to be in danger of dying! This world is pleasant—it would be dreary to be called from it, and to have to go who knows where?"

And then my mind made its first earnest effort to comprehend what had been infused into it concerning heaven and hell: and for the first time it recoiled, baffled; and for the first time glancing behind, on each side, and before it, it saw all round an unfathomed gulf: it felt the one point where it stood—the present; all the rest was formless cloud and vacant depth: and it shuddered at the thought of tottering, and plunging amid that chaos. While pondering this new idea, I heard the front door open; Mr. Bates came out, and with him was a nurse. After she had seen him mount his horse and depart, she was about to close the door. but I ran up to her.

"How is Helen Burns?"

"Very poorly," was the answer.

"Is it her Mr. Bates has been to see?"

"Yes."

"And what does he say about her?"

"He says she'll not be here long."

This phrase, uttered in my hearing yesterday, would have only conveyed the notion that she was about to be removed to Northumberland, to her own home. I should not have suspected that it meant she was dying; but I knew instantly now; it opened clear on my comprehension that Helen Burns was numbering her last days in this world, and that she was going to be taken to the region of spirits, if such region there were. I experienced a shock of horror, then a strong thrill of grief, then a desire—a necessity to see her; and I asked in what room she lay.

"She is in Miss Temple's room," said the nurse.

"May I go up and speak to her?"

"Oh, no, child! It is not likely; and now it is time for you to come in; you'll catch the fever if you stop out when the dew is falling."

The nurse closed the front door; I went in by the side entrance which led to the schoolroom: I was just in time; it was nine o'clock, and Miss Miller was calling the pupils to go to bed.

It might be two hours later, probably near eleven, when I—not having been able to fall asleep, and deeming, from the perfect silence of the dormitory, that my companions were all wrapped in profound repose—rose softly, put on my frock over my night-dress, and, without shoes, crept from the apartment, and set off in quest of Miss Temple's room. It was quite at the other end of the house; but I knew my way; and the light of the unclouded summer moon, entering here and there at passage windows, enabled me to find it without difficulty. An odor of camphor and burned vinegar warned me when I came near the fever room: and I passed its door quickly, fearful lest the nurse who sat up all night should hear me. I dreaded being discovered and sent back; for I must see Helen—I must embrace her before she died—I must give her one last kiss, exchange with her one last word.

Having descended a staircase, traversed a portion of the house below, and succeeded in opening and shutting, without noise, two doors, I reached another flight of steps; these I mounted, and then just opposite to me was Miss Temple's room. A light shone through the keyhole, and from under the door; a profound stillness pervaded the vicinity. Coming near, I found the door slightly ajar; probably to admit some fresh air into the close abode of sickness. Indisposed to hesitate,

and full of impatient impulses—soul and senses quivering with keen throes—I put it back and looked in. My eye sought Helen, and feared to find death.

Close by Miss Temple's bed, and half covered with its white curtains, there stood a little crib. I saw the outline of a form under the clothes, but the face was hid by the hangings: the nurse I had spoken to in the garden sat in an easy chair, asleep; an unsnuffed candle burned dimly on the table. Miss Temple was not to be seen: I knew afterwards that she had been called to a delirious patient in the fever room. I advanced; then paused by the crib side: my hand was on the curtain, but I preferred speaking before I withdrew it. I still recoiled at the dread of seeing a corpse.

"Helen!" I whispered softly; "are you awake?"

She stirred herself, put back the curtain, and I saw her face, pale, wasted, but quite composed: she looked so little changed that my fear was instantly dissipated.

"Can it be you, Jane?" she asked in her own gentle voice.

"Oh!" I thought, "she is not going to die; they are mistaken: she could not speak and look so calmly if she were."

I got on to her crib and kissed her; her forehead was cold, and her cheek both cold and thin, and so were her hand and wrist; but she smiled as of old.

"Why are you come here, Jane? It is past eleven o'clock: I heard it strike some minutes since."

"I came to see you, Helen: I heard you were very ill, and I could not sleep till I had spoken to you."

"You came to bid me good-bye, then: you are just in time probably."

"Are you going somewhere, Helen? Are you going home?"

"Yes; to my long home-my last home."

"No, no, Helen!" I stopped, distressed. While I tried to devour my tears, a fit of coughing seized Helen; it did not, however, wake the nurse; when it was over, she lay some minutes exhausted; then she whispered:

"Jane, your little feet are bare; lie down and cover yourself with my quilt."

I did so: she put her arm over me, and I nestled close to her. After a long silence, she resumed, still whispering,

"I am very happy, Jane; and when you hear that I am dead, you must be sure and not grieve: there is nothing to grieve about. We all

must die one day, and the illness which is removing me is not painful; it is gentle and gradual: my mind is at rest. I leave no one to regret me much: I have only a father; and he is lately married, and will not miss me. By dying young, I shall escape great sufferings. I had not qualities or talents to make my way very well in the world: I should have been continually at fault."

"But where are you going to, Helen? Can you see? Do you know?"

"I believe; I have faith: I am going to God."

"Where is God? What is God?"

"My Maker and yours, who will never destroy what He created. I rely implicitly on His power, and confide wholly in His goodness: I count the hours till that eventful one arrives which shall restore me to Him, reveal Him to me."

"You are sure, then, Helen, that there is such a place as heaven; and that our souls can get to it when we die?"

"I am sure there is a future state; I believe God is good; I can resign my immortal part to Him without any misgiving. God is my father; God is my friend: I love Him; I believe He loves me."

"And shall I see you again, Helen, when I die?"

"You will come to the same region of happiness: be received by the same mighty, universal Parent, no doubt, dear Jane."

Again I questioned; but this time only in thought. Where is that region? Does it exist? And I clasped my arms closer round Helen; she seemed dearer to me than ever; I felt as if I could not let her go; I lay with my face hidden on her neck. Presently she said in the sweetest tone,

"How comfortable I am! That last fit of coughing has tired me a little; I feel as if I could sleep: but don't leave me, Jane; I like to have you near me."

"I'll stay with you, dear Helen: no one shall take me away."

"Are you warm, darling?"

"Yes."

"Good-night, Jane."

"Good-night, Helen."

She kissed me, and I her; and we both soon slumbered.

When I awoke it was day; an unusual movement roused me; I looked up; I was in somebody's arms; the nurse held me; she was carrying me through the passage back to the dormitory. I was not reprimanded for leaving my bed; people had something else to think about: no explanation was afforded then to my many questions; but

a day or two afterwards I learned that Miss Temple, on returning to her own room at dawn, had found me laid in a little crib; my face against Helen Burns's shoulder, my arms round her neck. I was asleep, and Helen was—dead.

Her grave is in Brocklebridge churchyard: for fifteen years after her death it was only covered by a grassy mound; but now a grey marble tablet marks the spot, inscribed with her name, and the word "Resurgam."

CHAPTER 10

HITHERTO I have recorded in detail the events of my insignificant existence; to the first ten years of my life, I have given almost as many chapters. But this is not to be a regular autobiography. I am only bound to invoke memory where I know her responses will possess some degree of interest; therefore I now pass a space of eight years almost in silence: a few lines only are necessary to keep up the links of connection.

When the typhus fever had fulfilled its mission of devastation at Lowood, it gradually disappeared from thence; but not till its virulence and the number of its victims had drawn public attention on the school. Inquiry was made into the origin of the scourge, and by degrees various facts came out which excited public indignation in a high degree. The unhealthy nature of the site; the quantity and quality of the children's food; the brackish, fetid water used in its preparation; the pupils' wretched clothing and accommodations: all these things were discovered; and the discovery produced a result mortifying to Mr. Brocklehurst, but beneficial to the institution.

Several wealthy and benevolent individuals in the county subscribed largely for the erection of a more convenient building in a better situation; new regulations were made; improvements in diet and clothing introduced; the funds of the school were intrusted to the management of a committee. Mr. Brocklehurst, who, from his wealth and family connections, could not be overlooked, still retained the post of treasurer; but he was aided in the discharge of his duties by gentlemen of rather more enlarged and sympathizing minds: his office of inspector, too, was shared by those who knew how to combine reason with strictness, comfort with economy, compassion with uprightness.

The school, thus improved, became in time a truly useful and noble institution. I remained an inmate of its walls, after its regeneration, for eight years: six as pupil, and two as teacher; and in both capacities I bear my testimony to its value and importance.

During these eight years my life was uniform: but not unhappy, because it was not inactive. I had the means of an excellent education placed within my reach; a fondness for some of my studies, and a desire to excel in all, together with a great delight in pleasing my teachers, especially such as I loved, urged me on: I availed myself fully of the advantages offered me. In time I rose to be the first girl of the first class; then I was invested with the office of teacher; which I discharged with zeal for two years: but at the end of that time I altered.

Miss Temple, through all changes, had thus far continued superintendent of the seminary: to her instruction I owed the best part of my acquirements. Her friendship and society had been my continual solace; she had stood me in the stead of mother, governess, and, latterly, companion. At this period she married, removed with her husband (a clergyman, an excellent man, almost worthy of such a wife) to a distant county, and consequently was lost to me.

From the day she left I was no longer the same: with her was gone every settled feeling, every association that had made Lowood in some degree a home to me. I had imbibed from her something of her nature and much of her habits: more harmonious thoughts: what seemed better regulated feelings had become the inmates of my mind. I had given in allegiance to duty and order; I was quiet; I believed I was content: to the eyes of others, usually even to my own, I appeared a disciplined and subdued character.

But destiny, in the shape of the Rev. Mr. Nasmyth, came between me and Miss Temple: I saw her in her traveling dress step into a postchaise, shortly after the marriage ceremony; I watched the chaise mount the hill and disappear beyond its brow; and then retired to my own room, and there spent in solitude the greatest part of the halfholiday granted in honor of the occasion.

I walked about the chamber most of the time. I imagined myself only to be regretting my loss, and thinking how to repair it; but when my reflections were concluded, and I looked up and found that the afternoon was gone, and evening far advanced, another discovery dawned on me, namely, that in the interval I had undergone a transforming process; that my mind had put off all it had borrowed of

Miss Temple—or rather that she had taken with her the serene atmosphere I had been breathing in her vicinity—and that now I was left in my natural element, and beginning to feel the stirring of old emotions. It did not seem as if a prop were withdrawn, but rather as if a motive were gone: it was not the power to be tranquil which had failed me, but the reason for tranquillity was no more. My world had for some years been in Lowood: my experience had been of its rules and systems; now I remembered that the real world was wide, and that a varied field of hopes and fears, of sensations and excitements, awaited those who had courage to go forth into its expanse, to seek real knowledge of life amidst its perils. . . .

An age seemed to have elapsed since the day which brought me first to Lowood, and I had never quitted it since. My vacations had all been spent at school: Mrs. Reed had never sent for me to Gateshead; neither she nor any of her family had ever been to visit me. I had had no communication by letter or message with the outer world: school rules, school duties, school habits and notions, and voices, and faces, and phrases, and costumes, and preferences, and antipathies: such was what I knew of existence. And now I felt that it was not enough: I tired of the routine of eight years in one afternoon. I desired liberty; for liberty I gasped; for liberty I uttered a prayer; it seemed scattered on the wind then faintly blowing. I abandoned it and framed a humbler supplication; for change, stimulus: that petition, too, seemed swept off into vague space. "Then," I cried, half desperate, "grant me at least a new servitude!"

Here a bell, ringing the hour of supper, called me downstairs.

I was not free to resume the interrupted chain of my reflections till bedtime: even then a teacher who occupied the same room with me kept me from the subject to which I longed to recur, by a prolonged effusion of small talk. How I wished sleep would silence her! It seemed as if, could I but go back to the idea which had last entered my mind as I stood at the window, some inventive suggestion would rise for my relief.

Miss Gryce snored at last; she was a heavy Welshwoman, and till now her habitual nase! strains had never been regarded by me in any other light than as a nuisance; tonight I hailed the first deep notes with satisfaction . . .

[During the hours of the night Jane decided that what she wanted —because it was of no use wanting anything better—was a new

place, in a new house, among new faces and under new circumstances. To find such, she advertised herself in a newspaper. A week later came an answer bidding her send her references to Mrs. Fairfax, Thornfield, near Millcote, where a small girl was in need of teaching.

Having obtained formal leave to better herself, and the assurance that Mrs. Reed had no interest in anything she did, Jane was on the point of departing from Lowood when a visitor was announced. On her way to the parlor, someone ran out of the kitchen.]

"It's her, I am sure! I could have told her anywhere!" cried the individual who stopped my progress and took my hand.

I looked: I saw a woman attired like a well-dressed servant, ma-

I looked: I saw a woman attired like a well-dressed servant, matronly, yet still young; very good-looking, with black hair and eyes, and lively complexion.

"Well, who is it?" she asked in a voice and with a smile I half recognized; "you've not quite forgotten me, I think, Miss Jane?"

In another second I was embracing and kissing her rapturously: "Bessie! Bessie! Bessie!" that was all I said; whereat she half laughed, half cried, and we both went into the parlor. By the fire stood a little fellow of three years old, in plaid frock and trousers.

"That is my little boy," said Bessie, directly.

"Then you are married, Bessie?"

"Yes: nearly five years since, to Robert Leaven, the coachman; and I've a little girl besides Bobby there, that I've christened Jane."

"And you don't live at Gateshead?"

"I live at the lodge: the old porter has left."

"Well, and how do they all get on? Tell me everything about them, Bessie: but sit down first; and, Bobby, come and sit on my knee, will you?" but Bobby preferred sidling over to his mother.

"You're not grown so very tall, Miss Jane, nor so very stout," continued Mrs. Leaven. "I dare say they've not kept you too well at school: Miss Reed is the head and shoulders taller than you are; and Miss Georgiana would make two of you in breadth."

"Georgiana is handsome, I suppose, Bessie?"

"Very. She went up to London last winter with her mama, and there everybody admired her, and a young lord fell in love with her: but his relations were against the match; and—what do you think?—he and Miss Georgiana made it up to run away: but they were found

out and stopped. It was Miss Reed that found them out: I believe she was envious; and now she and her sister lead a cat and dog life together; they are always quarreling."

"Well, and what of John Reed?"

"Oh, he is not doing so well as his mama could wish. He went to college, and he got—plucked, I think they call it: and then his uncles wanted him to be a barrister, and study the law: but he is such a dissipated young man, they will never make much of him, I think."

"What does he look like?"

"He is very tall: some people call him a fine looking young man; but he has such thick lips."

"And Mrs. Reed?"

"Missis looks stout and well enough in the face, but I think she's not quite easy in her mind: Mr. John's conduct does not please her —he spends a deal of money."

"Did she send you here, Bessie?"

"No, indeed: but I have long wanted to see you, and when I heard that there had been a letter from you, and that you were going to another part of the country, I thought I'd just set off, and get a look at you before you were quite out of my reach."

"I am afraid you are disappointed in me, Bessie." I said this laughing: I perceived that Bessie's glance, through it expressed regard, did in no shape denote admiration.

"No, Miss Jane, not exactly: you are genteel enough; you look like a lady, and it is as much as ever I expected of you: you were no beauty as a child."

I smiled at Bessie's frank answer: I felt that it was correct, but I confess I was not quite indifferent to its import: at eighteen most people wish to please, and the conviction that they have not an exterior likely to second that desire brings anything but gratification.

"I dare say you are clever, though," continued Bessie, by way of solace. "What can you do? Can you play on the piano?"

"A little."

There was one in the room; Bessie went and opened it, and then asked me to sit down and give her a tune: I played a waltz or two, and she was charmed.

"The Miss Reeds could not play as well!" said she exultingly, "I always said you would surpass them in learning: and can you draw?"

"That is one of my paintings over the chimney-piece." It was a

landscape in water colors, of which I had made a present to the superintendent, in acknowledgment of her obliging mediation with the committee on my behalf, and which she had framed and glazed.

"Well, that is beautiful, Miss Jane! It is as fine a picture as any Miss Reed's drawing-master could paint, let alone the young ladies themselves, who could not come near it: and have you learned French?"

"Yes, Bessie, I can both read it and speak it."

"And you can work on muslin and canvas?"

"I can."

"Oh, you are quite a lady, Miss Jane! I knew you would be: you will get on whether your relations notice you or not. There was something I wanted to ask you. Have you ever heard anything from your father's kinsfolk, the Eyres?"

"Never in my life."

"Well, you notice Missis always said they were poor and quite despicable: and they may be poor; but I believe they are as much gentry as the Reeds are; for one day, nearly seven years ago, a Mr. Eyre came to Gateshead and wanted to see you; Missis said you were at school fifty miles off; he seemed so much disappointed, for he could not stay: he was going on a voyage to a foreign country, and the ship was to sail from London in a day or two. He looked quite a gentleman, and I believe he was your father's brother."

"What foreign country was he going to, Bessie?"

"An island thousands of miles off, where they make wine—the butler did tell me—"

"Madeira!" I suggested.

"Yes, that is it—that is the very word."

"So he went?"

"Yes; he did not stay many minutes in the house: Missis was very high with him; she called him afterwards a 'sneaking tradesman.' My Robert believes he was a wine-merchant."

"Very likely," I returned; "or perhaps clerk or agent to a wine-merchant."

Bessie and I conversed about old times an hour longer, and then she was obliged to leave me: I saw her again for a few minutes the next morning at Lowton, while I was waiting for the coach. We parted finally at the door of the Brocklehurst Arms there: each went her separate way; she set off for the brow of Lowood Fell to meet the

conveyance which was to take her back to Gateshead, I mounted the vehicle which was to bear me to new duties and a new life in the unknown environs of Millcote.

CHAPTER 11

[Jane first saw Millcote by dark, after a sixteen-hour trip from Lowton. She had waited half an hour in the coaching inn when a taciturn man appeared, put her and her luggage in a carriage and headed for Thornfield, six miles distant.]

The roads were heavy, the night misty; my conductor let his horse walk all the way. At last he turned in his seat and said:

"You're noan so far fro' Thornfield now."

Again I looked out: we were passing a church: I saw its low broad tower against the sky, and its bell was tolling a quarter; I saw a narrow galaxy of lights too, on a hill-side, marking a village or hamlet. About ten minutes after, the driver got down and opened a pair of gates; we passed through, and they clashed to behind us. We now slowly ascended a drive, and came upon the long front of a house: candle-light gleamed from one curtained bow-window; all the rest were dark. The car stopped at the front door; it was opened by a maidservant; I alighted and went in.

"Will you walk this way, ma'am," said the girl: and I followed her across a square hall with high doors all round: she ushered me into a room whose double illumination of fire and candle at first dazzled me, contrasting as it did with the darkness to which my eyes had been for two hours inured; when I could see, however, a cozy and agreeable picture presented itself to my view.

A snug, small room; a round table by a cheerful fire; an armchair high-backed and old-fashioned, wherein sat the neatest imaginable little elderly lady, in widow's cap, black silk gown and snowy muslin apron; exactly like what I had fancied Mrs. Fairfax, only less stately and milder looking. She was occupied in knitting: a large cat sat demurely at her feet; nothing in short was wanting to complete the beau-ideal of domestic comfort. A more reassuring introduction for a new governess could scarcely be conceived: there was no grandeur to

overwhelm, no stateliness to embarrass; and then, as I entered, the old lady got up, and promptly and kindly came forward to meet me.

"How do you do, my dear? I am afraid you have had a tedious ride; John drives so slowly: you must be cold, come to the fire."

"Mrs. Fairfax, I suppose?" said I.

"Yes, you are right: do sit down."

She conducted me to her own chair, and then began to remove my shawl and untie my bonnet-strings: I begged she would not give herself so much trouble.

"Oh, it is no trouble; I dare say your own hands are almost numbed with cold. Leah, make a little hot negus and cut a sandwich or two: here are the keys of the store-room."

And she produced from her pocket a most housewifely bunch of keys, and delivered them to the servant.

"Now, then, draw nearer to the fire," she continued. "You've brought your luggage with you, haven't you, my dear?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"I'll see it carried into your room," she said, and bustled out.

She treats me like a visitor, thought I. I little expected such a reception; I anticipated only coldness and stiffness: this is not like what I have heard of the treatment of governesses: but I must not exult too soon.

She returned, with her own hands cleared her knitting apparatus and a book or two from the table, to make room for the tray which Leah now brought, and then herself handed me the refreshments. I felt rather confused at being the object of more attention than I had ever before received, and that, too, shown by my employer and superior; but as she did not herself seem to consider she was doing anything out of her place, I thought it better to take her civilities quietly.

"Shall I have the pleasure of seeing Miss Fairfax tonight?" I asked, when I had partaken of what she offered me.

"What did you say, my dear? I am a little deaf," returned the good lady, approaching her ear to my mouth.

I repeated the question more distinctly.

"Miss Fairfax? Oh, you mean Miss Varens! Varens is the name of your future pupil."

"Indeed! Then she is not your daughter?"

"No-I have no family."

I should have followed up my first inquiry, by asking in what way Miss Varens was connected with her; but I recollected it was not polite to ask too many questions: besides, I was sure to hear in time.

"I am so glad," she continued, as she sat down opposite to me, and took the cat on her knee; "I am so glad you are come; it will be quite pleasant living here now with a companion. To be sure it is pleasant at any time; for Thornfield is a fine old hall, rather neglected of late years perhaps, but still it is a respectable place; yet you know in winter time one feels dreary quite alone, in the best quarters. I say alone -Leah is a nice girl to be sure, and John and his wife are very decent people; but then you see they are only servants, and one can't converse with them on terms of equality: one must keep them at due distance, for fear of losing one's authority. I'm sure last winter (it was a very severe one, if you recollect, and when it did not snow, it rained and blew), not a creature but the butcher and postman came to the house, from November till February; and I really got quite melancholy with sitting night after night alone; I had Leah in to read to me sometimes; but I don't think the poor girl liked the task much: she felt it confining. In spring and summer one got on better: sunshine and long days make such a difference; and then, just at the commencement of this autumn, little Adela Varens came and her nurse: a child makes a house alive all at once; and now you are here I shall be quite gay."

My heart really warmed to the worthy lady as I heard her talk; and I drew my chair a little nearer to her, and expressed my sincere wish that she might find my company as agreeable as she anticipated.

"But I'll not keep you sitting up late tonight," said she; "it is on the stroke of twelve now, and you have been traveling all day: you must feel tired. If you have got your feet well warmed, I'll show you your bedroom. I've had the room next to mine prepared for you; it is only a small apartment, but I thought you would like it better than one of the large front chambers: to be sure they have finer furniture, but they are so dreary and solitary, I never sleep in them myself."

I thanked her for her considerate choice, and as I really felt fatigued with my long journey, expressed my readiness to retire. She took her candle, and I followed her from the room. First she went to see if the hall-door was fastened; having taken the key from the lock, she led the way upstairs. The steps and banisters were of oak; the staircase window was high and latticed; both it and the long gallery into which the bedroom doors opened, looked as if they belonged to a church rather than a house. A very chill and vault-like air pervaded the stairs and gallery, suggesting cheerless ideas of space and

solitude; and I was glad, when finally ushered into my chamber, to find it of small dimensions, and furnished in ordinary modern style. . . . My couch had no thorns in it that night; my solitary room no fears. At once weary and content, I slept soon and soundly. When I awoke it was broad day.

The chamber looked such a bright little place to me as the sun shone in between the gay blue chintz window curtains, showing papered walls and a carpeted floor, so unlike the bare planks and stained plaster of Lowood, that my spirits rose at the view. Externals have a great effect on the young. I thought that a fairer era of life was beginning for me, one that was to have its flowers and pleasures, as well as its thorns and toils. My faculties, roused by the change of scene, the new field offered to hope, seemed all astir. I cannot precisely define what they expected, but it was something pleasant: not perhaps that day or that month, but at an indefinite future period.

I rose; I dressed myself with care: obliged to be plain—for I had no article of attire that was not made with extreme simplicity—I was still by nature solicitous to be neat. It was not my habit to be disregardful of appearance, or careless of the impression I made: on the contrary, I ever wished to look as well as I could, and to please as much as my want of beauty would permit. I sometimes regretted that I was not handsomer: I sometimes wished to have rosy cheeks, a straight nose, and small cherry mouth; I desired to be tall, stately, and finely developed in figure; I felt it a misfortune that I was so little, so pale, and had features so irregular and so marked. And why had I these aspirations and these regrets? It would be difficult to say: I could not then distinctly say it to myself; yet I had a reason, and a logical, natural reason too. However, when I had brushed my hair very smooth, and put on my black frock-which, Quakerlike as it was, at least had the merit of fitting to a nicety—and adjusted my clean white tucker, I thought I should do respectably enough to appear before Mrs. Fairfax; and that my new pupil would not at least recoil from me with antipathy. Having opened my chamber window, and seen that I left all things straight and neat on the toilet table, I ventured forth.

Traversing the long and matted gallery, I descended the slippery steps of oak; then I gained the hall: I halted there a minute; I looked at some pictures on the walls (one I remember represented a grim man in a cuirass, and one a lady with powdered hair and a pearl necklace), at a bronze lamp pendent from the ceiling, at a great clock

whose case was of oak curiously carved, and ebon black with time and rubbing. Everything appeared very stately and imposing to me: but then I was so little accustomed to grandeur. The hall-door, which was half of glass, stood open: I stepped over the threshold. It was a fine autumn morning; the early sun shone serenely on embrowned groves and still green fields: advancing on to the lawn, I looked up and surveyed the front of the mansion. It was three stories high, of proportions not vast, though considerable: a gentleman's manorhouse. not a nobleman's seat: battlements round the top gave it a picturesque look. Its grey front stood out well from the background of a rookery, whose cawing tenants were now on the wing: they flew over the lawn and grounds to alight in a great meadow, from which these were separated by a sunk fence, and where an array of mighty old thorn trees, strong, knotty, and broad as oaks, at once explained the etymology of the mansion's designation. Farther off were hills: not so lofty as those round Lowood, nor so craggy, nor so like barriers of separation from the living world; but yet quiet and lonely hills enough, and seeming to embrace Thornfield with a seclusion I had not expected to find existent so near the stirring locality of Millcote. A little hamlet, whose roofs were blended with trees, straggled up the side of one of these hills; the church of the district stood nearer Thornfield: its old towertop looked over a knoll between the house and gates.

I was yet enjoying the calm prospect and pleasant fresh air, yet listening with delight to the cawing of the rooks, yet surveying the wide, hoary front of the hall, and thinking what a great place it was for one lonely little dame like Mrs. Fairfax to inhabit, when that lady appeared at the door.

"What! out already?" said she. "I see you are an early riser." I went up to her, and was received with an affable kiss and shake of the hand.

"How do you like Thornfield?" she asked. I told her I liked it very much.

"Yes," she said, "it is a pretty place; but I fear it will be getting out of order, unless Mr. Rochester should take it into his head to come and reside here permanently; or, at least, visit it rather oftener: great houses and fine grounds require the presence of the proprietor."
"Mr. Rochester!" I exclaimed. "Who is he?"

"The owner of Thornfield," she responded quietly. "Did you not know he was called Rochester?"

Of course I did not-I had never heard of him before; but the old

lady seemed to regard his existence as a universally understood fact, with which everybody must be acquainted by instinct.

"I thought," I continued, "Thornfield belonged to you."

"To me? Bless you, child; what an idea! To me? I am only the housekeeper—the manager. To be sure I am distantly related to the Rochesters by the mother's side; or, at least, my husband was. He was a clergyman, incumbent of Hay—that little village yonder on the hill—and that church near the gates was his. The present Mr. Rochester's mother was a Fairfax, and second cousin to my husband; but I never presume on the connection—in fact it is nothing to me; I consider myself quite in the light of an ordinary housekeeper. My employer is always civil, and I expect nothing more."

"And the little girl-my pupil?"

"She is Mr. Rochester's ward; he commissioned me to find a governess for her. He intends to have her brought up in ——shire, I believe. Here she comes, with her bonne, as she calls her nurse." The enigma then was explained: this affable and kind little widow was no great dame, but a dependent like myself. I did not like her the worse for that; on the contrary, I felt better pleased than ever. The equality between her and me was real; not the mere result of condescension on her part: so much the better—my position was all the freer.

As I was meditating on this discovery, a little girl, followed by her attendant, came running up the lawn. I looked at my pupil, who did not at first appear to notice me: she was quite a child, perhaps seven or eight years old, slightly built, with a pale, small-featured face, and a redundancy of hair falling in curls to her waist.

"Good morning, Miss Adela," said Mrs. Fairfax. "Come and speak to the lady who is to teach you, and to make you a clever woman some day." She approached.

"C'est là ma gouvernante?" * said she, pointing to me, and addressing her nurse: who answered:

"Mais oui, certainement." †

"Are they foreigners?" I inquired, amazed at hearing the French language.

"The nurse is a foreigner, and Adela was born on the Continent; and, I believe, never left it till within six months ago. When she first came here she could speak no English; now she can make shift to talk it a little: I don't understand her, she mixes it so with French; but you will make out her meaning very well, I daresay."

^{* &}quot;Is that my governess?"

^{† &}quot;Yes, to be sure."

Fortunately I had had the advantage of being taught French by a French lady; and as I had always made a point of conversing with Madame Pierrot, as often as I could, and had, besides, during the last seven years, learned a portion of French by heart daily—applying myself to take pains with my accent, and imitating as closely as possible the pronunciation of my teacher—I had acquired a certain degree of readiness and correctness in the language, and was not likely to be much at a loss with Mademoiselle Adela. She came and shook hands with me when she heard that I was her governess; and as I led her in to breakfast, I addressed some phrases to her in her own tongue: she replied briefly at first, but after we were seated at the table, and she had examined me some ten minutes with her large hazel eyes, she suddenly commenced chattering fluently.

"Ah," cried she, in French, "you speak my language as well as Mr. Rochester does: I can talk to you as I can to him, and so can Sophie. She will be glad: nobody here understands her. Madame Fairfax is all English. Sophie is my nurse; she came with me over the sea in a great ship with a chimney that smoked—how it did smoke!—and I was sick, and so was Sophie, and so was Mr. Rochester. Mr. Rochester lay down on a sofa in a pretty room called the salon, and Sophie and I had little beds in another place. I nearly fell out of mine; it was like a shelf. And, Mademoiselle ——, what is your name?"

"Eyre—Jane Eyre."

"Aire? Bah! I cannot say it. Well: our ship stopped in the morning, before it was quite daylight, at a great city—a huge city, with very dark houses and all smoky; not at all like the pretty clean town I came from; and Mr. Rochester carried me in his arms over a plank to the land, and Sophie came after, and we all got into a coach, which took us to a beautiful large house, larger than this and finer, called a hotel. We stayed there nearly a week: I and Sophie used to walk every day in a great green place full of trees, called the Park; and there were many children there besides me, and a pond with beautiful birds in it, that I fed with crumbs,"

"Can you understand her when she runs on so fast?" asked Mrs. Fairfax.

I understood her very well, for I had been accustomed to the fluent tongue of Madame Pierrot.

"I wish," continued the good lady, "you would ask her a question or two about her parents: I wonder if she remembers them?"

"Adèle," I inquired, "with whom did you live when you were in that pretty clean town you spoke of?"

"I lived long ago with mama; but she is gone to the Holy Virgin. Mama used to teach me to dance and sing, and to say verses. A great many gentlemen and ladies came to see mama, and I used to dance before them, or to sit on their knees and sing to them: I liked it. Shall I let you hear me sing now?"

[When Adèle had demonstrated her singing and reciting and had offered to dance, Jane thanked her and inquired with whom she had lived after her mother's death.]

"With Madame Frédéric and her husband: she took care of me, but she is nothing related to me. I think she is poor, for she had not so fine a house as mama. I was not long there. Mr. Rochester asked me if I would like to go and live with him in England, and I said yes; for I knew Mr. Rochester before I knew Madame Frédéric, and he was always kind to me and gave me pretty dresses and toys: but you see he has not kept his word, for he has brought me to England, and now he has gone back again himself, and I never see him."

After breakfast, Adèle and I withdrew to the library: which room, it appears, Mr. Rochester had directed should be used as the school-room. Most of the books were locked up behind glass doors; but there was one bookcase left open containing everything that could be needed in the way of elementary works, and several volumes of light literature, poetry, biography, travels, a few romances, etc. I suppose he had considered that these were all the governess would require for her private perusal; and, indeed, they contented me amply for the present; compared with the scanty pickings I had now and then been able to glean at Lowood, they seemed to offer an abundant harvest of entertainment and information. In this room, too, there was a cabinet piano, quite new and of superior tone; also an easel for painting, and a pair of globes.

I found my pupil sufficiently docile, though disinclined to apply: she had not been used to regular occupation of any kind. I felt it would be injudicious to confine her too much at first; so, when I had talked to her a great deal, and got her to learn a little, and when the morning had advanced to noon, I allowed her to return to her nurse. I then proposed to occupy myself till dinner-time in drawing some little sketches for her use.

As I was going upstairs to fetch my portfolio and pencils, Mrs. Fairfax called to me: "Your morning school hours are over now, I suppose," said she. She was in a room the folding-doors of which stood open: I went in when she addressed me. It was a large, stately apartment, with purple chairs and curtains, a Turkey carpet, walnut-paneled walls, one vast window rich in stained glass, and a lofty ceiling, nobly molded. Mrs. Fairfax was dusting some vases of fine purple spar, which stood on a sideboard.

"What a beautiful room!" I exclaimed, as I looked round; for I had never before seen any half so imposing.

"Yes; this is the dining room. I have just opened the window, to let in a little air and sunshine; for everything gets so damp in apartments that are seldom inhabited: the drawing room yonder feels like a vault."

She pointed to a wide arch corresponding to the window, and hung like it with a Tyrian-dyed curtain, now looped up. Mounting to it by two broad steps and looking through, I thought I caught a glimpse of a fairy place, so bright to my novice-eyes appeared the view beyond. Yet it was merely a very pretty drawing room, and within it a boudoir, both spread with white carpets, on which seemed laid brilliant garlands of flowers; both ceiled with snowy moldings of white grapes and vine-leaves, beneath which glowed in rich contrast crimson couches and ottomans; while the ornaments on the pale Parian mantel-piece were of sparkling Bohemian glass, ruby red; and between the windows large mirrors repeated the general blending of snow and fire.

"In what order you keep these rooms, Mrs. Fairfax!" said I. "No dust, no canvas coverings: except that the air feels chilly, one would think they were inhabited daily."

"Why, Miss Eyre, though Mr. Rochester's visits here are rare, they are always sudden and unexpected; and as I observed that it put him out to find everything swathed up, and to have a bustle of arrangement on his arrival, I thought it best to keep the rooms in readiness."

"Is Mr. Rochester an exacting, fastidious sort of man?"

"Not particularly so but he has a gentleman's tastes and habits, and he expects to have things managed in conformity to them."

"Do you like him? Is he generally liked?"

"Oh, yes; the family have always been respected here. Almost all the land in this neighborhood, as far as you can see, has belonged to the Rochesters time out of mind."

"Well, but, leaving his land out of the question, do you like him? Is he liked for himself?"

"I have no cause to do otherwise than like him; and I believe he is considered a just and liberal landlord by his tenants: but he has never lived much among them."

"But has he no peculiarities? What, in short, is his character?"

"Oh! his character is unimpeachable, I suppose. He is rather peculiar, perhaps: he has traveled a great deal, and seen a great deal of the world, I should think. I dare say he is clever: but I never had much conversation with him."

"In what way is he peculiar?"

"I don't know—it is not easy to describe—nothing striking, but you feel it when he speaks to you: you cannot be always sure whether he is in jest or earnest, whether he is pleased or the contrary; you don't thoroughly understand him, in short—at least, I don't: but it is of no consequence, he is a very good master."

This was all the account I got from Mrs. Fairfax, of her employer and mine. There are people who seem to have no notion of sketching a character, or observing and describing salient points, either in persons or things: the good lady evidently belonged to this class; my queries puzzled, but did not draw her out. Mr. Rochester was Mr. Rochester in her eyes; a gentleman, a landed proprietor—nothing more: she inquired and searched no further, and evidently wondered at my wish to gain a more definite notion of his identity.

When we left the dining room, she proposed to show me over the rest of the house; and I followed her upstairs and downstairs, admiring as I went; for all was well-arranged and handsome. The large front chambers I thought especially grand; and some of the third story rooms, though dark and low, were interesting from their air of antiquity. The furniture once appropriated to the lower apartments had from time to time been removed here, as fashions changed: and the imperfect light entering by their narrow casements showed bedsteads of a hundred years old; chests in oak or walnut, looking, with their strange carvings of palm branches and cherubs' heads, like types of the Hebrew ark; rows of venerable chairs, high-backed and narrow; stools still more antiquated, on whose cushioned tops were yet apparent traces of half-effaced embroideries, wrought by fingers that for two generations had been coffin-dust. All these relics gave to the third story of Thornfield Hall the aspect of a home of the past: a shrine of memory. I liked the hush, the gloom, the quaintness of

these retreats in the day; but I by no means coveted a night's repose on one of those wide and heavy beds: shut in, some of them with doors of oak; shaded, others with wrought old English hangings crusted with thick work, portraying effigies of strange flowers, and stranger birds, and strangest human beings—all of which would have

looked strange, indeed, by the pallid gleam of moonlight.

"Do the servants sleep in these rooms?" I asked.

"No; they occupy a range of smaller apartments to the back; no one ever sleeps here: one would almost say that, if there were a ghost at Thornfield Hall, this would be its haunt."

"So I think: you have no ghost, then?"
"None that I ever heard of," returned Mrs. Fairfax, smiling.
"Nor any traditions of one? no legends or ghost stories?"

"I believe not. And yet it is said, the Rochesters have been rather a violent than a quiet race in their time: perhaps, though, that is the reason they rest tranquilly in their graves now."

"Yes—'after life's fitful fever they sleep well," I muttered. "Where are you going now, Mrs. Fairfax?" for she was moving away.
"On to the leads; will you come and see the view from thence?"

I followed still, up a very narrow staircase to the attics, and thence by a ladder and through a trap-door to the roof of the hall. I was now on a level with the crow colony, and could see into their nests. Leaning over the battlements and looking far down, I surveyed the grounds laid out like a map: the bright and velvet lawn closely girding the grey base of the mansion; the field, wide as a park, dotted with its ancient timber; the wood, dun and sere, divided by a path visibly overgrown, greener with moss than the trees were with foliage; the church at the gates, the road, the tranquil hills, all reposing in the autumn day's sun; the horizon bounded by a propitious sky, azure, marbled with pearly white. No feature in the scene was extraordinary, but all was pleasing. When I turned from it and repassed the trap-door, I could scarcely see my way down the ladder; the attic seemed black as a vault compared with that arch of blue air to which I had been looking up, and to that sunlit scene of grove, pasture, and green hill of which the hall was the centre, and over which I had been gazing with delight.

Mrs. Fairfax stayed behind a moment to fasten the trap-door; I, by dint of groping, found the outlet from the attic, and proceeded to descend the narrow garret staircase. I lingered in the long passage to which this led, separating the front and back rooms of the third

story: narrow, low, and dim, with only one little window at the far end, and looking, with its two rows of small black doors all shut, like a corridor in some Bluebeard's castle.

While I paced softly on, the last sound I expected to hear in so still a region, a laugh, struck my ear. It was a curious laugh; distinct, formal, mirthless. I stopped: the sound ceased, only for an instant; it began again, louder: for at first, though distinct, it was very low. It passed off in a clamorous peal that seemed to wake an echo in every lonely chamber; though it originated but in one, and I could have pointed out the door whence the accents issued.

"Mrs. Fairfax!" I called out: for I now heard her descending the great stairs. "Did you hear that loud laugh? Who is it?"

"Some of the servants, very likely," she answered: "perhaps Grace Poole."

"Did you hear it?" I again inquired.

"Yes, plainly: I often hear her; she sews in one of these rooms. Sometimes Leah is with her: they are frequently noisy together."

The laugh was repeated in its low, syllabic tone, and terminated in an odd murmur.

"Grace!" exclaimed Mrs. Fairfax.

I really did not expect any Grace to answer; for the laugh was as tragic, as preternatural a laugh as any I ever heard; and, but that it was high noon, and that no circumstance of ghostliness accompanied the curious cachinnation, but that neither scene nor season favored fear, I should have been superstitiously afraid. However, the event showed me I was a fool for entertaining a sense even of surprise.

The door nearest me opened, and a servant came out—a woman of between thirty and forty; a set, square-made figure, red-haired, and with a hard, plain face: any apparition less romantic or less ghostly could scarcely be conceived.

"Too much noise, Grace," said Mrs. Fairfax. "Remember directions!" Grace curtseyed silently and went in.

"She is a person we have to sew and assist Leah in her housemaid's work," continued the widow; "not altogether unobjectionable in some points, but she does well enough. By-the-bye, how have you got on with your new pupil this morning?"

The conversation, thus turned on Adèle, continued till we reached the light and cheerful region below. Adèle came running to meet us in the hall, exclaiming—

"Mesdames, vous êtes servies!" adding, "J'ai bien faim, moi!" * We found dinner ready, and waiting for us in Mrs. Fairfax's room.

CHAPTER 12

[The promise of a smooth career at Thornfield was not belied on longer acquaintance. Jane "felt a conscientious solicitude for Adèle's welfare and progress, and a quiet liking to her little self," and for Mrs. Fairfax, thankfulness for her kindness and pleasure in her society. But in her unoccupied time Jane yearned for wider horizons and the association of more people. Even the once-thrilling laugh and eccentric murmuring of Grace Poole had grown unnotable with repetition.

One still afternoon in January, as she walked to post a letter in the village, Jane paused on a stile mid-way down the hill by which the road approached Thornfield, lingering over the view until twilight.]

On the hilltop above me sat the rising moon; pale yet as a cloud, but brightening momently: she looked over Hay, which, half lost in trees, sent up a blue smoke from its few chimneys; it was yet a mile distant, but in the absolute hush I could hear plainly its thin murmurs of life. My ear too felt the flow of currents; in what dales and depths I could not tell: but there were many hills beyond Hay, and doubtless many becks threading their passes. That evening calm betrayed alike the tinkle of the nearest streams, the sough of the most remote.

A rude noise broke on these fine ripplings and whisperings, at once so far away and so clear: a positive tramp, tramp; a metallic clatter, which effaced the soft wave-wanderings; as, in a picture, the solid mass of a crag, or the rough boles of a great oak, drawn in dark and strong on the foreground, efface the aërial distance of azure-hill, sunny horizon, and blended clouds, where tint melts into tint.

The din was on the causeway: a horse was coming; the windings of the lane yet hid it, but it approached. I was just leaving the stile; yet, as the path was narrow, I sat still to let it go by. In those days I was young, and all sorts of fancies bright and dark tenanted my mind: the memories of nursery stories were there among other rubbish; and

^{* &}quot;Ladies, dinner is served! . . . I'm starved."

when they recurred, maturing youth added to them a vigor and vividness beyond what childhood could give. As this horse approached, and as I watched for it to appear through the dusk, I remembered certain of Bessie's tales, wherein figured a North-of-England spirit, called a "Gytrash"; which, in the form of horse, mule, or large dog, haunted solitary ways, and sometimes came upon belated travelers, as this horse was now coming upon me.

It was very near, but not yet in sight; when, in addition to the tramp, tramp, I heard a rush under the hedge, and close down by the hazel stems glided a great dog, whose black and white color made him a distinct object against the trees. It was exactly one mask of Bessie's Gytrash—a lion-like creature with long hair and a huge head: it passed me, however, quietly enough; not staying to look up, with strange pretercanine eyes, in my face, as I half expected it would. The horse followed—a tall steed, and on its back a rider. The man, the human being, broke the spell at once. Nothing ever rode man, the human being, broke the spell at once. Nothing ever rode the Gytrash: it was always alone; and goblins, to my notions, though they might tenant the dumb carcasses of beasts, could scarce covet shelter in the common-place human form. No Gytrash was this—only a traveler taking the short cut to Millcote. He passed, and I went on; a few steps, and I turned: a sliding sound and an exclamation of "What the deuce is to do now?" and a clattering tumble, arrested my attention. Man and horse were down; they had slipped on the sheet of ice which glazed the causeway. The dog came bounding back, and seeing his master in a predicament, and bearing the horse back, and seeing his master in a predicament, and hearing the horse groan, barked till the evening hills echoed the sound, which was deep in proportion to his magnitude. He snuffed round the prostrate group, and then he ran up to me; it was all he could do—there was no other help at hand to summon. I obeyed him, and walked down to the traveler, by this time struggling himself free of his steed. His efforts were so vigorous, I thought he could not be much hurt; but I asked him the question:

"Are you injured, sir?"

I think he was swearing, but am not certain; however, he was pronouncing some formula which prevented him from replying to me directly.

"Can I do anything?" I asked again.
"You must just stand on one side," he answered as he rose, first to his knees, and then to his feet. I did; whereupon began a heaving, stamping, clattering process, accompanied by a barking and baying

which removed me effectually some yards distance; but I would not be driven quite away till I saw the event. This was finally fortunate; the horse was re-established, and the dog was silenced with a "Down, Pilot!" The traveler now, stooping, felt his foot and leg, as if trying whether they were sound; apparently something ailed them, for he halted to the stile whence I had just risen, and sat down.

I was in the mood for being useful, or at least officious, I think, for I now drew near him again.

"If you are hurt, and want help, sir, I can fetch someone either from Thornfield Hall or from Hay."

"Thank you; I shall do: I have no broken bones—only a sprain"; and again he stood up and tried his foot, but the result extorted an involuntary "Ugh!"

Something of daylight still lingered, and the moon was waxing bright: I could see him plainly. His figure was enveloped in a riding cloak, fur collared, and steel clasped; its details were not apparent, but I traced the general points of middle height, and considerable breadth of chest. He had a dark face, with stern features and a heavy brow; his eyes and gathered eyebrows looked ireful and thwarted just now; he was past youth, but had not reached middle age; perhaps he might be thirty-five. I felt no fear of him, and but little shyness. Had he been a handsome, heroic-looking young gentleman, I should not have dared to stand thus questioning him against his will, and offering my services unasked. I had hardly ever seen a handsome youth; never in my life spoken to one. I had a theoretical reverence and homage for beauty, elegance, gallantry, fascination; but had I met those qualities incarnate in masculine shape, I should have known instinctively that they neither had nor could have sympathy with anything in me, and should have shunned them as one would fire, lightning, or anything else that is bright but antipathetic.

If even this stranger had smiled and been good-humored to me when I addressed him; if he had put off my offer of assistance gaily and with thanks, I should have gone on my way and not felt any vocation to renew inquiries: but the frown, the roughness of the traveler set me at my ease: I retained my station when he waved to me to go, and announced:

"I cannot think of leaving you, sir, at so late an hour, in this solitary lane, till I see you are fit to mount your horse."

He looked at me when I said this: he had hardly turned his eyes in my direction before.

"I should think you ought to be at home yourself," said he, "if you have a home in this neighborhood: where do you come from?"

"From just below; and I am not at all afraid of being out late when it is moonlight: I will run over to Hay for you with pleasure, if you wish it; indeed, I am going there to post a letter."

"You live just below—do you mean at that house with the battlements?"—pointing to Thornfield Hall, on which the moon cast a hoary gleam, bringing it out distinct and pale from the woods, that, by contrast with the western sky, now seemed one mass of shadow.

"Yes, sir."

"Whose house is it?"

"Mr. Rochester's."

"Do you know Mr. Rochester?"

"No, I have never seen him."

"He is not resident, then?"

"No."

"Can you tell me where he is?"

"I cannot."

"You are not a servant at the hall, of course. You are—" He stopped, ran his eye over my dress, which, as usual, was quite simple: a black merino cloak, a black beaver bonnet; neither of them half fine enough for a lady's maid. He seemed puzzled to decide what I was: I helped him.

"I am the governess."

"Ah, the governess!" he repeated; "deuce take me, if I had not forgotten! The governess!" and again my raiment underwent scrutiny. In two minutes he rose from the stile: his face expressed pain when he tried to move.

"I cannot commission you to fetch help," he said; "but you may help me a little yourself, if you will be so kind."

"Yes, sir."

"You have not an umbrella that I can use as a stick?"

"No."

"Try to get hold of my horse's bridle and lead him to me: you are not afraid?"

I should have been afraid to touch a horse when alone, but when told to do it, I was disposed to obey. I put down my muff on the stile, and went up to the tall steed; I endeavored to catch the bridle, but it was a spirited thing, and would not let me come near its head; I made effort on effort, though in vain: meantime, I was mortally

afraid of its trampling forefeet. The traveler waited and watched for some time, and at last he laughed.

"I see," he said, "the mountain will never be brought to Mahomet, so all you can do is to aid Mahomet to go to the mountain; I must beg of you to come here."

I came. "Excuse me," he continued; "necessity compels me to make you useful." He laid a heavy hand on my shoulder, and leaning on me with some stress, limped to his horse. Having once caught the bridle, he mastered it directly, and sprang to his saddle; grimacing grimly as he made the effort, for it wrenched his sprain.

"Now," said he, releasing his under lip from a hard bite, "just hand me my whip; it lies there under the hedge."

I sought it and found it.

"Thank you; now make haste with the letter to Hay, and return as fast as you can."

A touch of a spurred heel made his horse first start and rear, and then bound away; the dog rushed in his traces: all three vanished. . . .

I took up my muff and walked on. The incident had occurred and was gone for me: it was an incident of no moment, no romance, no interest in a sense; yet it marked with change one single hour of a monotonous life. My help had been needed and claimed; I had given it: I was pleased to have done something; trivial, transitory though the deed was, it was yet an active thing, and I was weary of an existence all passive. The new face, too, was like a new picture introduced to the gallery of memory; and it was dissimilar to all the others hanging there: firstly, because it was masculine; and, secondly, because it was dark, strong, and stern. I had it still before me when I entered Hay, and slipped the letter into the post-office; I saw it as I walked fast down hill all the way home. When I came to the stile, I stopped a minute, looked round and listened, with an idea that a horse's hoofs might ring on the causeway again, and that a rider in a cloak, and a Gytrash-like Newfoundland dog, might be again apparent: I saw only the hedge and a pollard willow before me, rising up still and straight to meet the moonbeams; I heard only the faintest waft of wind roaming fitful among the trees round Thornfield, a mile distant; and when I glanced down in the direction of the murmur, my eye, traversing the hall-front, caught a light kindling in a window: it reminded me that I was late, and I hurried on.

[Reluctant to end the faint excitement occasioned by her walk, Jane lingered on the terrace until the striking of the hall clock broke her reverie, and she went in.]

The hall was not dark, nor yet was it lit, only by the high-hung bronze lamp: a warm glow suffused both it and the lower steps of the oak staircase. This ruddy shine issued from the great dining room, whose two-leaved door stood open, and showed a genial fire in the grate, glancing on marble hearth and brass fire-irons, and revealing purple draperies and polished furniture, in the most pleasant radiance. It revealed, too, a group near the mantelpiece: I had scarcely caught it, and scarcely become aware of a cheerful mingling of voices, among which I seemed to distinguish the tones of Adèle, when the door closed.

I hastened to Mrs. Fairfax's room: there was a fire there too, but no candle, and no Mrs. Fairfax. Instead, all alone, sitting upright on the rug, and gazing with gravity at the blaze, I beheld a great black and white long-haired dog, just like the Gytrash of the lane. It was so like it that I went forward and said,

"Pilot," and the thing got up and came to me and snuffed me. I caressed him, and he wagged his great tail: but he looked an eerie creature to be alone with, and I could not tell whence he had come. I rang the bell, for I wanted a candle; and I wanted, too, to get an account of this visitant. Leah entered.

"What dog is this?"

"He came with master."

"With whom?"

"With master-Mr. Rochester-he is just arrived."

"Indeed! and is Mrs. Fairfax with him?"

"Yes, and Miss Adela; they are in the dining room, and John is gone for a surgeon: for master has had an accident; his horse fell and his ankle is sprained."

"Did the horse fall in Hay Lane?"

"Yes, coming down hill; it slipped on some ice."

"Ah! Bring me a candle, will you, Leah?"

Leah brought it; she entered, followed by Mrs. Fairfax, who repeated the news; adding that Mr. Carter the surgeon was come, and was now with Mr. Rochester: then she hurried out to give orders about tea, and I went upstairs to take off my things.

CHAPTER 13

M. ROCHESTER, it seems, by the surgeon's orders, went to bed early that night; nor did he rise soon next morning. When he did come down, it was to attend to business: his agent and some of his tenants were arrived, and waiting to speak with him.

Adèle and I had now to vacate the library: it would be in daily requisition as a reception-room for callers. A fire was lit in an apartment upstairs, and there I carried our books, and arranged it for the future schoolroom. I discerned in the course of the morning that Thornfield Hall was a changed place: no longer silent as a church, it echoed every hour or two to a knock at the door, or a clang of the bell; steps, too, often traversed the hall, and new voices spoke in different keys below it; a rill from the outer world was flowing through it; it had a master. For my part, I liked it better.

Adèle was not easy to teach that day; she could not apply: she kept running to the door and looking over the banisters to see if she could get a glimpse of Mr. Rochester; then she coined pretexts to go downstairs, in order, as I shrewdly suspected, to visit the library, where I knew she was not wanted; then, when I got a little angry, and made her sit still, she continued to talk incessantly of her "ami, Monsieur Edouard Fairfax de Rochester," as she dubbed him (I had not before heard his prenomens), and to conjecture what presents he had brought her: for it appears he had intimated the night before, that when his luggage came from Millcote, there would be found among it a little box in whose contents she had an interest.

"Et cela doit signifier," said she, "qu'il y aura là dedans un cadeau pour moi, et peut-être pour vous aussi, mademoiselle. Monsieur a parlé de vous: il m'a demandé le nom de ma gouvernante, et si elle n'était pas une petite personne, assez mince et un peu pâle. J'ai dit qu'oui: car c'est vrai, n'est-ce pas, mademoiselle?" *

I and my pupil dined as usual in Mrs. Fairfax's parlor; the afternoon was wild and snowy, and we passed it in the schoolroom. At dark I allowed Adèle to put away books and work, and to run down-

^{* &}quot;That must mean there is a present for me in it, and maybe for you, too, Mademoiselle. Monsieur has spoken of you: he asked me my governess' name, and if she were small, rather thin and somewhat pale. I said yes, because it's true, isn't it, Mademoiselle?"

stairs; for, from the comparative silence below, and from the cessation of appeals to the doorbell, I conjectured that Mr. Rochester was now at liberty. Left alone, I walked to the window; but nothing was to be seen thence: twilight and snow-flakes together thickened the air, and hid the very shrubs on the lawn. I let down the curtain and went back to the fireside.

In the clear embers I was tracing a view, not unlike a picture I remembered to have seen of the castle of Heidelberg, on the Rhine, when Mrs. Fairfax came in, breaking up by her entrance the fiery mosaic I had been piecing together, and scattering too some heavy unwelcome thoughts that were beginning to throng on my solitude.

"Mr. Rochester would be glad if you and your pupil would take tea with him in the drawing room this evening," said she: "he has been so much engaged all day that he could not ask to see you before."

"When is his tea-time?" I inquired.

"Oh, at six o'clock: he keeps early hours in the country. You had better change your frock now; I will go with you and fasten it. Here is a candle."

"Is it necessary to change my frock?"

"Yes, you had better: I always dress for the evening when Mr. Rochester is here."

This additional ceremony seemed somewhat stately; however, I repaired to my room, and, with Mrs. Fairfax's aid, replaced my black stuff dress by one of black silk; the best and the only additional one I had, except one of light grey, which, in my Lowood notions of the toilette, I thought too fine to be worn, except on first-rate occasions.

"You want a brooch," said Mrs. Fairfax. I had a single little pearl ornament which Miss Temple gave me as a parting keepsake: I put it on, and then we went downstairs. Unused as I was to strangers, it was rather a trial to appear thus formally summoned in Mr. Rochester's presence. I let Mrs. Fairfax precede me into the dining room, and kept in her shade as we crossed that apartment; and, passing the arch, whose curtain was now dropped, entered the elegant recess beyond.

Two wax candles stood lighted on the table, and two on the mantelpiece; basking in the light and heat of a superb fire, lay Pilot—Adèle knelt near him. Half reclined on a couch appeared Mr. Rochester, his foot supported by the cushion; he was looking at Adèle and the dog: the fire shone full on his face. I knew my traveler with

his broad and jetty eyebrows; his square forehead, made squarer by the horizontal sweep of his black hair. I recognized his decisive nose, more remarkable for character than beauty; his full nostrils, denoting, I thought, choler; his grim mouth, chin, and jaw—yes, all three were very grim, and no mistake. His shape, now divested of cloak, I perceived harmonized in squareness with his physiognomy: I suppose it was a good figure in the athletic sense of the term—broad chested and thin flanked, though neither tall nor graceful.

Mr. Rochester must have been aware of the entrance of Mrs. Fairfax and myself; but it appeared he was not in the mood to notice us, for he never lifted his head as we approached.

"Here is Miss Eyre, sir," said Mrs. Fairfax, in her quiet way. He bowed, still not taking his eyes from the group of the dog and child.

"Let Miss Eyre be seated," said he: and there was something in the forced stiff bow, in the impatient yet formal tone, which seemed further to express, "What the deuce is it to me whether Miss Eyre be there or not? At this moment I am not disposed to accost her."

I sat down quite disembarrassed. A reception of finished politeness would probably have confused me: I could not have returned or repaid it by answering grace and elegance on my part; but harsh caprice laid me under no obligation; on the contrary, a decent quiescence, under the freak of manner, gave me the advantage. Besides, the eccentricity of the proceeding was piquant: I felt interested to see how he would go on.

He went on as a statue would, that is, he neither spoke nor moved. Mrs. Fairfax seemed to think it necessary that some one should be amiable, and she began to talk. Kindly, as usual—and, as usual, rather trite—she condoled with him on the pressure of business he had had all day; on the annoyance it must have been to him with that painful sprain: then she commended his patience and perseverance in going through with it.

"Madam, I should like some tea," was the sole rejoinder she got. She hastened to ring the bell; and, when the tray came, she proceeded to arrange the cups, spoons, etc., with assiduous celerity. I and Adèle went to the table; but the master did not leave his couch.

"Will you hand Mr. Rochester's cup?" said Mrs. Fairfax to me; "Adèle might perhaps spill it."

I did as requested. As he took the cup from my hand, Adèle, thinking the moment propitious for making a request in my favor, cried out:

"N'est-ce pas, monsieur, qu'il y a un cadeau pour Mademoiselle Eyre, dans votre petit coffre?" *

"Who talks of cadeaux?" said he, gruffly: "did you expect a present, Miss Eyre? Are you fond of presents?" and he searched my face with eyes that I saw were dark, irate, and piercing.

"I hardly know, sir; I have little experience of them: they are generally thought pleasant things."

"Generally thought? But what do you think?"

"I should be obliged to take time, sir, before I could give you an answer worthy of your acceptance: a present has many faces to it, has it not? and one should consider all, before pronouncing an opinion as to its nature."

"Miss Eyre, you are not so unsophisticated as Adèle: she demands a 'cadeau,' clamorously, the moment she sees me: you beat about the bush."

"Because I have less confidence in my deserts than Adèle has: she can prefer the claim of old acquaintance, and the right too of custom; for she says you have always been in the habit of giving her playthings; but if I had to make out a case I should be puzzled, since I am a stranger, and have done nothing to entitle me to an acknowledgment."

"Oh, don't fall back on over-modesty! I have examined Adèle, and find you have taken great pains with her: she is not bright, she has no talents; yet in a short time she has made much improvement."

"Sir, you have now given me my 'cadeau'; I am obliged to you; it is the meed teachers most covet; praise of their pupils' progress."

"Humph!" said Mr. Rochester, and he took his tea in silence.

"Come to the fire," said the master, when the tray was taken away, and Mrs. Fairfax had settled into a corner with her knitting; while Adèle was leading me by the hand round the room, showing me the beautiful books and ornaments on the consoles and chiffonnières. We obeyed, as in duty bound; Adèle wanted to take a seat on my knee, but she was ordered to amuse herself with Pilot.

"You have been resident in my house three months?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you came from----?"

"From Lowood school, in ----shire."

"Ah! a charitable concern.—How long were you there?"

"Eight years."

^{* &}quot;There's a present in your little trunk for Mademoiselle Eyre, isn't there?"

"Eight years! you must be tenacious of life. I thought half the time in such a place would have done up any constitution! No wonder you have rather the look of another world. I marveled where you had got that sort of face. When you came on me in Hay Lane last night, I thought unaccountably of fairy tales, and had half a mind to demand whether you had bewitched my horse: I am not sure yet. Who are your parents?"

"I have none."

"Nor ever had, I suppose: do you remember them?"

"No."

"I thought not. And so you were waiting for your people when you sat on that stile?"

"For whom, sir?"

"For the men in green: it was a proper moonlight evening for them. Did I break through one of your rings, that you spread that damned ice on the causeway?"

I shook my head. "The men in green all forsook England a hundred years ago," said I, speaking as seriously as he had done. "And not even in Hay Lane, or the fields about it, could you find a trace of them. I don't think either summer or harvest, or winter moon, will ever shine on their revels more."

Mrs. Fairfax had dropped her knitting, and, with raised eyebrows, seemed wondering what sort of talk this was.

"Well," resumed Mr. Rochester, "if you disown parents, you must have some sort of kinsfolk: uncles and aunts?"

"No; none that I ever saw."

"And your home?"

"I have none."

"Where do your brothers and sisters live?"

"I have no brothers or sisters."

"Who recommended you to come here?"

"I advertised, and Mrs. Fairfax answered my advertisement."

"Yes," said the good lady, who now knew what ground we were upon, "and I am daily thankful for the choice Providence led me to make. Miss Eyre has been an invaluable companion to me, and a kind and careful teacher to Adèle."

"Don't trouble yourself to give her a character," returned Mr. Rochester: "eulogiums will not bias me; I shall judge for myself. She began by felling my horse."

"Sir?" said Mrs. Fairfax.

"I have to thank her for this sprain."

The widow looked bewildered.

"Miss Eyre, have you ever lived in a town?"

"No, sir."

"Have you seen much society?"

"None but the pupils and teachers of Lowood; and now the inmates of Thornfield."

"Have you read much?"

"Only such books as came in my way; and they have not been numerous, or very learned."

"You have lived the life of a nun: no doubt you are well drilled in religious forms; Brocklehurst, who I understand directs Lowood, is a parson, is he not?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you girls probably worshiped him, as a convent full of religieuses would worship their director."

"Oh, no."

"You are very cool! No! What! a novice not worship her priest! That sounds blasphemous."

"I disliked Mr. Brocklehurst; and I was not alone in the feeling. He is a harsh man; at once pompous and meddling: he cut off our hair; and for economy's sake bought us bad needles and thread, with which we could hardly sew."

"That was very false economy," remarked Mrs. Fairfax, who now again caught the drift of the dialogue.

"And was that the head and front of his offending?" demanded Mr. Rochester.

"He starved us when he had the sole superintendence of the provision department, before the committee was appointed; and he bored us with long lectures once a week, and with evening readings from books of his own inditing, about sudden deaths and judgments, which made us afraid to go to bed."

"What age were you when you went to Lowood?"

"About ten."

"And you stayed there eight years: and are now, then, eighteen?" I assented.

"Arithmetic, you see, is useful: without its aid, I should hardly have been able to guess your age. It is a point difficult to fix where the features and countenance are so much at variance as in your case. And now what did you learn at Lowood? Can you play?"

"A little."

"Of course: that is the established answer. Go into the library—I mean, if you please. (Excuse my tone of command; I am used to say 'Do this,' and it is done: I cannot alter my customary habits for one new inmate.) Go, then, into the library; take a candle with you; leave the door open; sit down to the piano, and play a tune."

I departed, obeying his directions.

"Enough!" he called out in a few minutes. "You play a little, I see; like any other English school-girl: perhaps rather better than some, but not well."

I closed the piano, and returned. Mr. Rochester continued.

"Adèle showed me some sketches this morning, which she said were yours. I don't know whether they were entirely of your doing: probably a master aided you?"

"No, indeed!" I interjected.

"Ah! that pricks pride. Well, fetch me your portfolio, if you can vouch for its contents being original; but don't pass your word unless you are certain: I can recognize patchwork."

"Then I will say nothing, and you shall judge for yourself, sir."

I brought the portfolio from the library.

"Approach the table," said he; and I wheeled it to his couch. Adèle and Mrs. Fairfax drew near to see the pictures.

"No crowding," said Mr. Rochester: "take the drawings from my hand as I finish with them; but don't push your faces up to mine."

He deliberately scrutinized each sketch and painting. Three he laid aside; the others, when he had examined them, he swept from him.

"Take them off to the other table, Mrs. Fairfax," said he, "and look at them with Adèle; you" (glancing at me) "resume your seat, and answer my questions. I perceive these pictures were done by one hand: was that hand yours?"

"Yes."

"And when did you find time to do them? They have taken much time, and some thought."

"I did them in the last two vacations I spent at Lowood, when I had no other occupation."

"Where did you get your copies?"

"Out of my head."

"That head I see now on your shoulders?"

"Yes, sir."

"Has it other furniture of the same kind within?"

"I should think it may have: I should hope-better."

He spread the pictures before him, and again surveyed then alternately. . . .

"Were you happy when you painted these pictures?" asked Mr. Rochester, presently.

"I was absorbed, sir: yes, and I was happy. To paint them, in short, was to enjoy one of the keenest pleasures I have ever known."

"That is not saying much. Your pleasures, by your own account, have been few; but I daresay you did exist in a kind of artist's dreamland while you blended and arranged these strange tints. Did you sit at them long each day?"

"I had nothing else to do, because it was the vacation, and I sat at them from morning till noon, and from noon till night: the length of the midsummer days favored my inclination to apply."

"And you felt self-satisfied with the result of your ardent labors?"
"Far from it. I was tormented by the contrast between my ideas and my handiwork: in each case I had imagined something which I was quite powerless to realize."

"Not quite: you have secured the shadow of your thought; but no more, probably. You had not enough of the artist's skill and science to give it full being: yet the drawings are, for a school-girl, peculiar. As to the thoughts, they are elfish. . . ."

I had scarce tied the strings of the portfolio, when, looking at his watch, he said abruptly—

"It is nine o'clock: what are you about, Miss Eyre, to let Adèle sit up so long? Take her to bed."

Adèle went to kiss him before quitting the room: he endured the caress, but scarcely seemed to relish it more than Pilot would have done, nor so much.

"I wish you all good-night, now," said he, making a movement of the hand toward the door, in token that he was tired of our company, and wished to dismiss us. Mrs. Fairfax folded up her knitting: I took my portfolio: we curtseyed to him, received a frigid bow in return, and so withdrew.

"You said Mr. Rochester was not strikingly peculiar, Mrs. Fairfax," I observed, when I rejoined her in her room, after putting Adèle to bed.

"Well, is he?"

"I think so: he is very changeful and abrupt."

"True: no doubt he may appear so to a stranger, but I am so accustomed to his manner, I never think of it; and then, if he has peculiarities of temper, allowance should be made."

"Why?"

"Partly because it is his nature—and we can none of us help our nature; and, partly, he has painful thoughts, no doubt, to harass him, and make his spirits unequal."

"What about?"

"Family troubles, for one thing."

"But he has no family."

"Not now, but he has had—or, at least, relatives. He lost his elder brother a few years since."

"His elder brother?"

"Yes. The present Mr. Rochester has not been very long in possession of the property; only about nine years."

"Nine years is a tolerable time. Was he so very fond of his brother as to be still inconsolable for his loss?"

"Why, no-perhaps not. I believe there were some misunderstandings between them. Mr. Rowland Rochester was not quite just to Mr. Edward; and, perhaps, he prejudiced his father against him. The old gentleman was fond of money, and anxious to keep the family estate together. He did not like to diminish the property by division, and yet he was anxious that Mr. Edward should have wealth, too, to keep up the consequence of the name; and, soon after he was of age, some steps were taken that were not quite fair, and made a great deal of mischief. Old Mr. Rochester and Mr. Rowland combined to bring Mr. Edward into what he considered a painful position, for the sake of making his fortune: what the precise nature of that position was I never clearly knew, but his spirit could not brook what he had to suffer in it. He is not very forgiving: he broke with his family, and now for many years he has led an unsettled kind of life. I don't think he has ever been resident at Thornfield for a fortnight together, since the death of his brother without a will left him master of the estate; and, indeed, no wonder he shuns the old place."

"Why should he shun it?"

"Perhaps he thinks it gloomy."

The answer was evasive—I should have liked something clearer; but Mrs. Fairfax either could not, or would not, give me more explicit information of the origin and nature of Mr. Rochester's trials. She averred they were a mystery to herself, and that what she knew was

chiefly from conjecture. It was evident, indeed, that she wished me to drop the subject, which I did accordingly.

CHAPTER 14

Por Several subsequent days I saw little of Mr. Rochester. In the mornings he seemed much engaged with business, and, in the afternoon, gentlemen from Millcote or the neighborhood called, and sometimes stayed to dine with him. When his sprain was well enough to admit of horse exercise, he rode out a good deal; probably to return these visits, as he generally did not come back till late at night.

During this interval, even Adèle was seldom sent for to his presence, and all my acquaintance with him was confined to an occasional rencontre in the hall, on the stairs, or in the gallery, when he would sometimes pass me haughtily and coldly, just acknowledging my presence by a distant nod or a cool glance, and sometimes bow and smile with gentlemanlike affability. His changes of mood did not offend me, because I saw that I had nothing to do with their alternation; the ebb and flow depended on causes quite disconnected with me.

One day he had had company to dinner, and had sent for my portfolio; in order, doubtless, to exhibit its contents: the gentlemen went away early, to attend a public meeting at Millcote, as Mrs. Fairfax informed me; but the night being wet and inclement, Mr. Rochester did not accompany them. Soon after they were gone, he rang the bell: a message came that I and Adèle were to go downstairs. I brushed Adèle's hair and made her neat, and having ascertained that I was myself in my usual Quaker trim, where there was nothing to retouch—all being too close and plain, braided locks included, to admit of disarrangement—we descended, Adèle wondering whether the petit coffre was at length come; for, owing to some mistake, its arrival had hitherto been delayed. She was gratified: there it stood, a little carton, on the table when we entered the dining-room. She appeared to know it by instinct.

Ma boite! ma boite! * exclaimed she, running towards it.

"Yes—there is your 'boite' at last: take it into a corner, you genuine

^{* &}quot;My box! my box!"

daughter of Paris, and amuse yourself with disemboweling it," said the deep and rather sarcastic voice of Mr. Rochester, proceeding from the depths of an immense easy chair at the fireside. "And mind," he continued, "don't bother me with any details of the anatomical process, or any notice of the condition of the entrails: let your operation be conducted in silence: tiens-toi tranquille, enfant; comprends-tu?" *

Adèle seemed scarcely to need the warning; she had already retired to a sofa with her treasure, and was busy untying the cord which secured the lid. Having removed this impediment, and lifted certain silvery envelopes of tissue paper, she merely exclaimed:

"Oh ciel! Que c'est beau!" † and then remained absorbed in ecstatic contemplation.

"Is Miss Eyre there?" now demanded the master, half rising from his seat to look round to the door, near which I still stood.

"Ah! well; come forward: be seated here." He drew a chair near his own. "I am not fond of the prattle of children," he continued; "for, old bachelor as I am, I have no pleasant associations connected with their lisp. It would be intolerable to me to pass a whole evening tête-à-tête with a brat. Don't draw that chair further off, Miss Eyre; sit down exactly where I placed it-if you please, that is. Confound these civilities! I continually forget them. Nor do I particularly affect simple-minded old ladies. By-the-by, I must have mine in mind; it won't do to neglect her; she is a Fairfax, or wed to one; and blood is said to be thicker than water."

He rang and dispatched an invitation to Mrs. Fairfax, who soon arrived, knitting-basket in hand.

"Good-evening, madam; I sent to you for a charitable purpose: I have forbidden Adèle to talk to me about her presents, and she is bursting with repletion; have the goodness to serve her as auditress and interlocutrice: it will be one of the most benevolent acts you ever performed."

Adèle, indeed, no sooner saw Mrs. Fairfax, than she summoned her to her sofa and there quickly filled her lap with the porcelain, the ivory, the waxen contents of her "boite"; pouring out, meantime, explanations and raptures in such broken English as she was mistress of.

"Now I have performed the part of a good host," pursued Mr.

^{* &}quot;Be quiet, child; do you understand?" † "Oh, heavens, how beautiful it is!"

Rochester, "put my guests into the way of amusing each other, I ought to be at liberty to attend to my own pleasure. Miss Eyre, draw your chair still a little further forward: you are yet too far back; I cannot see you without disturbing my position in this comfortable chair, which I have no mind to do."

I did as I was bid, though I would much rather have remained somewhat in the shade: but Mr. Rochester had such a direct way of giving orders, it seemed a matter of course to obey him promptly.

We were, as I have said, in the dining room: the luster, which had been lit for dinner, filled the room with a festal breadth of light; the large fire was all red and clear; the purple curtains hung rich and ample before the lofty windows and loftier arch; everything was still, save the subdued chat of Adèle (she dared not speak aloud), and, filling up each pause, the beating of winter rain against the panes.

Mr. Rochester, as he sat in his damask-covered chair, looked different to what I had seen him look before; not quite so stern—much less gloomy. There was a smile on his lips, and his eyes sparkled, whether with wine or not, I am not sure; but I think it very probable. He was, in short, in his after-dinner mood; more expanded and genial, and also more self-indulgent than the frigid and rigid temper of the morning: still he looked preciously grim, cushioning his massive head against the swelling back of his chair, and receiving the light of the fire on his granite-hewn features, and in his great, dark eyes; for he had great, dark eyes, and very fine eyes, too—not without a certain change in their depths sometimes, which, if it was not softness, reminded you, at least, of that feeling.

He had been looking two minutes at the fire, and I had been looking the same length of time at him, when, turning suddenly, he caught my gaze fastened on his physiognomy.

"You examine me, Miss Eyre," said he: "do you think me hand-some?"

I should, if I had deliberated, have replied to this question by something conventionally vague and polite; but the answer somehow slipped from my tongue before I was aware: "No, sir."

"Ah! By my word! there is something singular about you," said he: "you have the air of a little nonnette; quaint, quiet, grave, and simple, as you sit with your hands before you, and your eyes generally bent on the carpet (except, by-the-by, when they are directed piercingly to my face; as just now, for instance); and when one asks you a question, or makes a remark to which you are obliged to reply, you rap out a round rejoinder, which, if not blunt, is at least brusque. What do you mean by it?"

"Sir, I was too plain: I beg your pardon. I ought to have replied that it was not easy to give an impromptu answer to a question about appearances; that tastes differ; that beauty is of little consequence, or something of that sort."

"You ought to have replied no such thing. Beauty of little consequence, indeed! And so, under pretense of softening the previous outrage, of stroking and soothing me into placidity, you stick a sly penknife under my ear! Go on: what fault do you find with me, pray? I suppose I have all my limbs and all my features like any other man?"

"Mr. Rochester, allow me to disown my first answer: I intended no pointed repartee: it was only a blunder."

"Just so: I think so: and you shall be answerable for it. Criticize me: does my forehead not please you?"

He lifted up the sable waves of hair which lay horizontally over his brow, and showed a solid enough mass of intellectual organs, but an abrupt deficiency where the suave sign of benevolence should have risen.

"Now, ma'am, am I a fool?"

"Far from it, sir. You would, perhaps, think me rude if I inquired in return whether you are a philanthropist?"

"There again! Another stick of the penknife, when she pretended to pat my head: and that is because I said I did not like the society of children and old women (low be it spoken!). No, young lady, I am not a general philanthropist; but I bear a conscience"; and he pointed to the prominences which are said to indicate that faculty, and which, fortunately for him, were sufficiently conspicuous; giving, indeed, a marked breadth to the upper part of his head: "and, besides, I once had a kind of rude tenderness of heart. When I was as old as you, I was a feeling fellow enough; partial to the unfledged, unfostered, and unlucky; but fortune has knocked me about since: she has even kneaded me with her knuckles, and now I flatter myself I am hard and tough as an India-rubber ball; pervious, though, through a chink or two still, and with one sentient point in the middle of the lump. Yes: does that leave hope for me?"

"Hope of what, sir?"

"Of my final re-transformation from India-rubber back to flesh?"

"Decidedly he has had too much wine," I thought; and I did not know what answer to make to his queer question: how could I tell whether he was capable of being re-transformed?

"You look very much puzzled, Miss Eyre; and though you are not pretty any more than I am handsome, yet a puzzled air becomes you; besides, it is convenient, for it keeps those searching eyes of yours away from my physiognomy, and busies them with the worsted flowers of the rug; so puzzle on. Young lady, I am disposed to be gregarious and communicative tonight."

With this announcement he rose from his chair, and stood, leaning his arm on the marble mantelpiece: in that attitude his shape was seen plainly as well as his face; his unusual breadth of chest, disproportionate almost to his length of limb. I am sure most people would have thought him an ugly man; yet there was so much unconscious pride in his port; so much ease in his demeanor; such a look of complete indifference to his own external appearance; so haughty a reliance on the power of other qualities, intrinsic or adventitious, to atone for the lack of mere personal attractiveness, that, in looking at him, one inevitably shared the indifference, and, even in a blind, imperfect sense, put faith in the confidence.

"I am disposed to be gregarious and communicative tonight," he repeated; "and that is why I sent for you: the fire and the chandelier were not sufficient company for me; nor would Pilot have been, for none of these can talk. Adèle is a degree better, but still far below the mark; Mrs. Fairfax ditto; you, I am persuaded, can suit me if you will: you puzzled me the first evening I invited you down here. I have almost forgotten you since: other ideas have driven yours from my head; but tonight I am resolved to be at ease; to dismiss what importunes, and recall what pleases. It would please me now to draw you out—to learn more of you—therefore speak."

Instead of speaking, I smiled; and not a very complacent or sub-missive smile either.

"Speak," he urged.

"What about, sir?"

"Whatever you like. I leave both the choice of subject and the manner of treating it entirely to yourself."

Accordingly I sat and said nothing. "If he expects me to talk for the mere sake of talking and showing off, he will find he has addressed himself to the wrong person," I thought.

"You are dumb, Miss Eyre."

I was dumb still. He bent his head a little toward me, and with a single hasty glance seemed to dive into my eyes.

"Stubborn?" he said, "and annoyed. Ah, it is consistent. I put my request in an absurd, almost insolent form. Miss Eyre, I beg your pardon. The fact is, once for all, I don't wish to treat you like an inferior: that is (correcting himself), I claim only such superiority as must result from twenty years' difference in age and a century's advance in experience. This is legitimate, et j'y tiens,* as Adèle would say; and it is by virtue of this superiority and this alone that I desire you to have the goodness to talk to me a little now, and divert my thoughts, which are galled with dwelling on one point—cankering as a rusty nail."

He had deigned an explanation; almost an apology: I did not feel insensible to his condescension, and would not seem so.

"I am willing to amuse you if I can, sir: quite willing; but I cannot introduce a topic, because how do I know what will interest you? Ask me questions, and I will do my best to answer them."

"Then, in the first place, do you agree with me that I have a right to be a little masterful, abrupt; perhaps exacting, sometimes, on the grounds I stated; namely, that I am old enough to be your father, and that I have battled through a varied experience with many men of many nations, and roamed over half the globe, while you have lived quietly with one set of people in one house?"

"Do as you please, sir."

"That is no answer; or rather it is a very irritating, because a very evasive one; reply clearly."

"I don't think, sir, you have a right to command me, merely because you are older than I, or because you have seen more of the world than I have; your claim to superiority depends on the use you have made of your time and experience."

"Humph! Promptly spoken. But I won't allow that, seeing that it would never suit my case; as I have made an indifferent, not to say a bad, use of both advantages. Leaving superiority out of the question then, you must still agree to receive my orders now and then, without being piqued or hurt by the tone of command—will you?"

I smiled: I thought to myself Mr. Rochester is peculiar—he seems to forget that he pays me £30 per annum for receiving his orders.

"The smile is very well," said he, catching instantly the passing expression; "but speak too."

^{* &}quot;And I hold to it"

"I was thinking, sir, that very few masters would trouble themselves to inquire whether or not their paid subordinates were piqued and hurt by their orders."

"Paid subordinates! What, you are my paid subordinate, are you? Oh yes, I had forgotten the salary! Well then, on that mercenary ground, will you agree to let me hector a little?"

"No, sir, not on that ground: but, on the ground that you did forget it, and that you care whether or not a dependent is comfortable in his dependency, I agree heartily."

"And will you consent to dispense with a great many conventional forms and phrases, without thinking that the omission arises from insolence?"

"I am sure, sir, I should never mistake informality for insolence: one I rather like, the other nothing free-born would submit to, even for a salary."

"Humbug! Most things free-born will submit to anything for a salary; therefore, keep to yourself, and don't venture on generalities of which you are intensely ignorant. However, I mentally shake hands with you for your answer, despite its inaccuracy; and as much for the manner in which it was said, as for the substance of the speech: the manner was frank and sincere; one does not often see such a manner: no, on the contrary, affectation, or coldness, or stupid, coarse-minded misapprehension of one's meaning are the usual rewards of candor. Not three in three thousand raw school-girl governesses would have answered me as you have just done. But I don't mean to flatter you: if you are cast in a different mold to the majority, it is no merit of yours: Nature did it. And then, after all, I go too fast in my conclusions: for what I yet know, you may be no better than the rest; you may have intolerable defects to counterbalance your few good points."

"And so may you," I thought. My eye met his as the idea crossed my mind: he seemed to read the glance, answering as if its import had been spoken as well as imagined:

"Yes, yes, you are right," said he; "I have plenty of faults of my own: I know it, and I don't wish to palliate them, I assure you. God wot I need not be too severe about others; I have a past existence, a series of deeds, a color of life to contemplate within my own breast, which might well call my sneers and censures from my neighbors to myself. I started, or rather (for, like other defaulters, I like to lay half the blame on ill fortune and adverse circumstances) was thrust

on to a wrong tack at the age of one and twenty, and have never recovered the right course since: but I might have been very different; I might have been as good as you—wiser—almost as stainless. I envy you your peace of mind, your clean conscience, your unpolluted memory. Little girl, a memory without blot or contamination must be an exquisite treasure—an inexhaustible source of pure refreshment: is it not?"

"How was your memory when you were eighteen, sir?"

"All right then; limpid, salubrious: no gush or bilge water had turned it to fetid puddle. I was your equal at eighteen-quite your equal. Nature meant me to be, on the whole, a good man, Miss Eyre: one of the better end; and you see I am not so. You would say you don't see it: at least I flatter myself I read as much in your eye (beware, by the bye, what you express with that organ, I am quick at interpreting its language). Then take my word for it—I am not a villain: you are not to suppose that—not to attribute to me any such bad eminence; but, owing, I verily believe, rather to circumstances than to my natural bent, I am a trite common-place sinner, hackneyed in all the poor petty dissipations with which the rich and worthless try to put on life. Do you wonder that I avow this to you? Know, that in the course of your future life you will often find yourself elected the involuntary confidant of your acquaintances' secrets: people will instinctively find out, as I have done, that it is not your forte to tell of yourself, but to listen while others talk of themselves; they will feel, too, that you listen with no malevolent scorn of their indiscretion, but with a kind of innate sympathy; not the less comforting and encouraging because it is very unobtrusive in its manifestations."

"How do you know?—how can you guess all this, sir?"
"I know it well; therefore I proceed almost as freely as if I were writing my thoughts in a diary. You would say, I should have been superior to circumstances: so I should—so I should; but you see I was not. When fate wronged me, I had not the wisdom to remain cool: I turned desperate; then I degenerated. Now, when any vicious simple-ton excites my disgust by his paltry ribaldry, I cannot flatter myself that I am better than he: I am forced to confess that he and I are on a level. I wish I had stood firm-God knows I do! Dread remorse when you are tempted to err, Miss Eyre: remorse is the poison of life."

"Repentance is said to be its cure, sir."

"It is not its cure. Reformation may be its cure; and I could reform—I have strength yet for that—if—but where is the use of thinking of it, hampered, burdened, cursed as I am? Besides, since happiness is irrevocably denied me, I have a right to get pleasure out of life: and I will get it, cost what it may."

"Then you will degenerate still more, sir."

"Possibly: yet why should I, if I can get sweet, fresh pleasure? And I may get it as sweet and fresh as the wild honey the bee gathers on the moor."

"It will sting-it will taste bitter, sir."

[The conversation advanced beyond Jane's depth. She interrupted it, observing that it was Adèle's bedtime.]

"Never mind, wait a minute: Adèle is not ready to go to bed yet. My position, Miss Eyre, with my back to the fire, and my face to the room, favors observation. While talking to you, I have also occasionally watched Adèle. (I have my own reasons for thinking her a curious study, reasons that I may, nay that I shall, impart to you some day); she pulled out of her box, about ten minutes ago, a little pink silk frock; rapture lit her face as she unfolded it; coquetry runs in her blood, blends with her brains, and seasons the marrow of her bones. 'Il faut que je l'essaie!' cried she; 'et à l'instant même!' * and she rushed out of the room. She is now with Sophie, undergoing a robing process: in a few minutes she will re-enter; and I know what I shall see—a miniature of Céline Varens, as she used to appear on the boards at the rising of—: but never mind that. However, my tenderest feelings are about to receive a shock: such is my presentiment; stay now, to see whether it will be realized."

Ere long, Adèle's little foot was heard tripping across the hall. She entered, transformed as her guardian had predicted. A dress of rose-colored satin, very short, and as full in the skirt as it could be gathered, replaced the brown frock she had previously worn; a wreath of rosebuds circled her forehead; her feet were dressed in silk stockings and small white satin sandals.

"Est-ce que ma robe va bien?" cried she, bounding forwards; "et mes souliers? et mes bras? Tenez, je crois que je vais danser!" †

And spreading out her dress, she chasséed across the room; till, having reached Mr. Rochester, she wheeled lightly round before him

^{* &}quot;I must try it on . . . at once!"

^{† &}quot;Does my dress not suit me? and my slippers? I feel like dancing!"

on tip-toe, then dropped on one knee at his feet, exclaiming:

"Monsieur, je vous remercie mille fois de votre bonté;" * then rising, she added, "C'est comme cela que maman faisait, n'est-ce pas, monsieur?" †

"Pre-cise-ly!" was the answer; "and, comme cela, she charmed my English gold out of my British breeches pocket. I have been green, too, Miss Eyre,—ay, grass green: not a more vernal tint freshens you now than once freshencd me. My Spring is gone, however: but it has left me that French floweret on my hands; which, in some moods, I would fain be rid of. Not valuing now the root whence it sprang; having found that it was of a sort which nothing but gold dust could manure, I have but half a liking to the blossom: especially when it looks so artificial as just now. I keep it and rear it rather on the Roman Catholic principle of expiating numerous sins, great or small, by one good work. I'll explain all this some day. Good-night."

CHAPTER 15

M. ROCHESTER DID, on a future occasion, explain it.

It was one afternoon, when he chanced to meet me and Adèle in the grounds; and while she played with Pilot and her shuttle-cock, he asked me to walk up and down a long beech avenue within sight of her.

He then said that she was the daughter of a French opera-dancer, Céline Varens, toward whom he had once cherished what he called a "grande passion." This passion Céline had professed to return with even superior ardor. He thought himself her idol; ugly as he was: he believed, as he said, that she preferred his taille d'athlète ‡ to the elegance of the Apollo Belvidere.

"And, Miss Eyre, so much was I flattered by this preference of the Gallic sylph for her British gnome, that I installed her in an hotel; gave her a complete establishment of servants, a carriage, cashmeres, diamonds, dentelles, etc. In short, I began the process of ruining myself in the received style, like any other spoony. I had not, it seems, the originality to chalk out a new road to shame and destruction, but

^{* &}quot;Thank you a thousand times for your kindness, Monsieur."

^{† &}quot;Mama acted just that way, didn't she, Monsieur?"

[‡] Athlete's figure

trod the old track with stupid exactness not to deviate an inch from the beaten centre. I had—as I deserved to have—the fate of all other spoonies. Happening to call one evening, when Céline did not expect me, I found her out; but it was a warm night, and I was tired with strolling through Paris, so I sat down in her boudoir; happy to breathe the air consecrated so lately by her presence. No, I exaggerate; I never thought there was any consecrating virtue about her: it was rather a sort of pastille perfume she had left; a scent of musk and amber, than an odor of sanctity. I was just beginning to stifle with the fumes of conservatory flowers and sprinkled essences, when I bethought myself to open the window and step out on to the balcony. It was moonlight and gas-light besides, and very still and serene. The balcony was furnished with a chair or two; I sat down, took out a cigar—I will take one now, if you will excuse me."

Here ensued a pause, filled up by the producing and lighting of a cigar; having placed it to his lips and breathed a trail of Havana incense on the freezing and sunless air, he went on:

"I liked bonbons too, in those days, Miss Eyre, and I was croquant * -overlook the barbarism-croquant chocolate comfits, and smoking alternately, watching meantime the equipages that rolled along the fashionable streets toward the neighboring opera house, when in an elegant close carriage drawn by a beautiful pair of English horses, and distinctly seen in the brilliant city-night, I recognized the 'voiture' I had given Céline. She was returning: of course my heart thumped with impatience against the iron rails I leant upon. The carriage stopped, as I had expected, at the hotel door; my flame (that is the very word for an opera inamorata) alighted: though muffled in a cloak—an unnecessary encumbrance, by the bye, on so warm a June evening-I knew her instantly by her little foot, seen peeping from the skirt of her dress, as she skipped from the carriage-step. Bending over the balcony I was about to murmur, 'Mon ange'-in a tone, of course, which should be audible to the ear of love alone—when a figure jumped from the carriage after her; cloaked also; but that was a spurred heel which had rung on the pavement, and that was a hatted head which now passed under the arched porte-cochere of the hotel.

"You never felt jealousy, did you, Miss Eyre? Of course not: I need not ask you; because you never felt love. You have both sentiments yet to experience; your soul sleeps; the shock is yet to be given which shall waken it. You think all existence lapses in as quiet a flow as that

^{*} Crunching

in which your youth has hitherto slid away. Floating on with closed eyes and muffled ears, you neither see the rocks bristling not far off in the bed of the flood, nor hear the breakers boil at their base. But I tell you—and you may mark my words—you will come some day to a craggy pass of the channel, where the whole of life's stream will be broken up into whirl and tumult, foam and noise: either you will be dashed to atoms on crag points, or lifted up and borne on by some master wave into a calmer current—as I am now.

"I like this day: I like that sky of steel; I like the sternness and stillness of the world under this frost. I like Thornfield; its antiquity; its retirement; its old crow-trees and thorn-trees; its grey façade, and lines of dark windows reflecting that metal welkin: and yet how long have I abhorred the very thought of it; shunned it like a great plague-house! How I do still abhor—"

He ground his teeth and was silent: he arrested his step and struck his boot against the hard ground. Some hated thought seemed to have him in its grip, and to hold him so tightly that he could not advance.

We were ascending the avenue when he thus paused; the hall was before us. Lifting his eye to its battlements, he cast over them a glare such as I never saw before or since. Pain, shame, ire—impatience, disgust, detestation—seemed momentarily to hold a quivering conflict in the large pupil dilating under his ebon eyebrow. Wild was the wrestle which should be paramount; but another feeling rose and triumphed: something hard and cynical; self-willed and resolute: it settled his passion and petrified his countenance: he went on:

"During the moment I was silent, Miss Eyre, I was arranging a point with my destiny. She stood there, by that beech-trunk—a hag like one of those who appeared to Macbeth on the heath of Forres. 'You like Thornfield?' she said, lifting her finger; and then she wrote in the air a memento, which ran in lurid hieroglyphics all along the housefront, between the upper and lower row of windows. 'Like it if you can!' 'Like it if you dare!'

"'I will like it,' said I. 'I dare like it'; and (he subjoined moodily) I will keep my word: I will break obstacles to happiness, to goodness—yes, goodness; I wish to be a better man than I have been; than I am—as Job's leviathan broke the spear, the dart and the habergeon, hindrances which others count as iron and brass, I will esteem but straw and rotten wood."

Adèle here ran before him with her shuttlecock. "Away!" he cried harshly; "keep at a distance, child; or go in to Sophie!" Continuing

then to pursue his walk in silence, I ventured to recall him to the point whence he had abruptly diverged:

"Did you leave the balcony, sir," I asked, "when Mlle. Varens entered?"

I almost expected a rebuff for this hardly well-timed question: but, on the contrary, waking out of his scowling abstraction, he turned his eyes toward me, and the shade seemed to clear off his brow. "Oh, I had forgotten Céline! Well, to resume. When I saw my charmer thus come in accompanied by a cavalier, I seemed to hear a hiss, and the green snake of jealousy, rising on undulating coils from the moonlit balcony, glided within my waistcoat, and ate its way in two minutes to my heart's core. Strange!" he exclaimed, suddenly starting again from the point. "Strange that I should choose you for the confidant of all this, young lady: passing strange that you should listen to me quietly, as if it were the most usual thing in the world for a man like me to tell stories of his opera-mistress to a quaint, inexperienced girl like you! But the last singularity explains the first, as I intimated once before: you, with your gravity, considerateness, and caution were made to be the recipient of secrets. Besides, I know what sort of a mind I have placed in communication with my own: I know it is not one liable to take infection: it is a peculiar mind; it is an unique one. Happily I do not mean to harm it: but, if I did, it would not take harm from me. The more you and I converse, the better; for while I cannot blight you, you may refresh me." After this digression he proceeded:

"I remained in the balcony. 'They will come to her boudoir no doubt,' thought I: 'let me prepare an ambush.' So putting my hand in through the open window, I drew the curtain over it, leaving only an opening through which I could take observations; then I closed the casement, all but a chink just wide enough to furnish an outlet to lovers' whispered vows: then I stole back to my chair; and as I resumed it the pair came in. My eye was quickly at the aperture. Céline's chamber-maid entered, lit a lamp, left it on the table and withdrew. The couple were thus revealed to me clearly: both removed their cloaks, and there was 'the Varens' shining in satin and jewels—my gifts of course—and there was her companion in an officer's uniform; and I knew him for a young roué of a vicomte—a brainless and vicious youth whom I had sometimes met in society, and had never thought of hating because I despised him so absolutely. On recognizing him, the fang of the snake, jealousy, was instantly broken; because at the same

moment my love for Céline sank under an extinguisher. A woman who could betray me for such a rival was not worth contending for: she deserved only scorn; less, however, than I, who had been her dupe.

"They began to talk; their conversation eased me completely: frivolous, mercenary, heartless, and senseless, it was rather calculated to weary than enrage a listener. A card of mine lay on the table; this being perceived brought my name under discussion. Neither of them possessed energy or wit to belabor me soundly; but they insulted me as coarsely as they could in their little way: especially Céline; who even waxed rather brilliant on my personal defects—deformities she termed them. Now it had been her custom to launch out into fervent admiration of what she called my beauté mâle *: wherein she differed diametrically from you, who told me point blank, at the second interview, that you did not think me handsome. The contrast struck me at the time, and—"

Adèle here came running up again.

"Monsieur, John has just been to say that your agent has called and wishes to see you."

"Ah! in that case I must abridge. Opening the window, I walked in upon them; liberated Céline from my protection; gave her notice to vacate her hotel; offered her a purse for immediate exigencies; disregarded screams, hysterics, prayers, protestations, convulsions; made an appointment with the vicomte for a meeting at the Bois de Boulogne. Next morning I had the pleasure of encountering him; left a bullet in one of his poor, etiolated arms, feeble as the wing of a chicken in the pip, and then thought I had done with the whole crew. But unluckily the Varens, six months before, had given me this fillette Adèle; who she affirmed was my daughter; and perhaps she may be, though I see no proofs of such grim paternity written in her countenance: Pilot is more like me than she. Some years after I had broken with the mother, she abandoned her child and ran away to Italy with a musician or singer. I acknowledged no natural claim on Adèle's part to be supported by me; nor do I now acknowledge any, for I am not her father; but hearing that she was quite destitute, I e'en took the poor thing out of the slime and mud of Paris, and transplanted it here, to grow up clean in the wholesome soil of an English country garden. Mrs. Fairfax found you to train it; but now you know that it is the illegitimate offspring of a French opera-girl, you will perhaps think differently of your post and pro-

^{*} Male beauty

tégée: you will be coming to me some day with notice that you have found another place—that you beg me to look out for a new governess, etc.—eh?"

"No: Adèle is not answerable for either her mother's faults or yours; I have a regard for her, and now that I know she is, in a sense, parentless—forsaken by her mother and disowned by you, sir—I shall cling closer to her than before. How could I possibly prefer the spoiled pet of a wealthy family, who would hate her governess as a nuisance, to a lonely little orphan, who leans toward her as a friend?"

"Oh, that is the light in which you view it! Well, I must go in now; and you too: it darkens."

But I stayed out a few minutes longer with Adèle and Pilot—ran a race with her, and played a game of battledore and shuttlecock. When we went in and I had removed her bonnet and coat, I took her on my knee; kept her there an hour, allowing her to prattle as she liked: not rebuking even some little freedoms and trivialities into which she was apt to stray when much noticed: and which betrayed in her a superficiality of character, inherited probably from her mother, hardly congenial to an English mind. Still she had her merits; and I was disposed to appreciate all that was good in her to the utmost. I sought in her countenance and features a likeness to Mr. Rochester, but found none: no trait, no turn of expression announced relationship. It was a pity: if she could but have been proved to resemble him, he would have thought more of her.

It was not till after I had withdrawn to my own chamber for the night, that I steadily reviewed the tale Mr. Rochester had told me. As he had said, there was probably nothing at all extraordinary in the substance of the narrative itself: a wealthy Englishman's passion for a French dancer, and her treachery to him, were everyday matters enough, no doubt, in society; but there was something decidedly strange in the paroxysm of emotion which had suddenly seized him, when he was in the act of expressing the present contentment of his mood, and his newly revived pleasure in the old hall and its environs. I meditated wonderingly on this incident: but gradually quitting it, as I found it for the present inexplicable, I turned to the consideration of my master's manner to myself. The confidence he had thought fit to repose in me seemed a tribute to my discretion: I regarded and accepted it as such. His deportment had now for some weeks been more uniform toward me than at the first. I never

seemed in his way; he did not take fits of chilling hauteur: when he met me unexpectedly, the encounter seemed welcome; he had always a word and sometimes a smile for me: when summoned by formal invitation to his presence, I was honored by a cordiality of reception that made me feel I really possessed the power to amuse him, and that these evening conferences were sought as much for his pleasure as for my benefit.

[As Jane lay wakeful in bed that night, pondering the change in Mr. Rochester that had turned him into the object most welcome to her sight, peculiar sounds at the door alarmed her. Telling herself it was only Pilot brushing past, she had composed herself to sleep when a demoniac laugh was uttered at the keyhole, and steps were heard to retreat toward the third floor of the house.]

Impossible now to remain longer by myself: I must go to Mrs. Fairfax. I hurried on my frock and a shawl; I withdrew the bolt and opened the door with a trembling hand. There was a candle burning just outside, left on the matting in the gallery. I was surprised at this circumstance: but still more was I amazed to perceive the air quite dim, as if filled with smoke; and, while looking to the right hand and left, to find whence these blue wreaths issued, I became further aware of a strong smell of burning.

Something creaked: it was a door ajar, and that door was Mr. Rochester's, and the smoke rushed in a cloud from thence. I thought no more of Mrs. Fairfax; I thought no more of Grace Poole or the laugh: in an instant, I was within the chamber. Tongues of flame darted round the bed: the curtains were on fire. In the midst of blaze and vapor, Mr. Rochester lay stretched motionless, in deep sleep.

"Wake! wake!" I cried—I shook him, but he only murmured and turned: the smoke had stupified him. Not a moment could be lost: the very sheets were kindling. I rushed to his basin and ewer; fortunately, one was wide and the other deep, and both were filled with water. I heaved them up, deluged the bed and its occupant, flew back to my own room, brought my own water-jug, baptized the couch afresh, and, by God's aid, succeeded in extinguishing the flames which were devouring it.

The hiss of the quenched element, the breakage of a pitcher which I had flung from my hand when I had emptied it, and, above all, the

splash of the shower-bath I had liberally bestowed, roused Mr. Rochester at last. Though it was now dark, I knew he was awake; because I heard him fulminating strange anathemas at finding himself lying in a pool of water.

"Is there a flood?" he cried.

"No, sir," I answered; "but there has been a fire: get up, do, you are drenched now; I will fetch you a candle."

"In the name of all the elves in Christendom, is that Jane Eyre?" he demanded. "What have you done with me, witch, sorceress? Who is in the room besides you? Have you plotted to drown me?"

"I will fetch you a candle, sir; and, in Heaven's name, get up. Somebody has plotted something: you cannot too soon find out who and what it is."

"There—I am up now; but at your peril you fetch a candle yet: wait two minutes till I get into some dry garments, if any dry there be—yes, here is my dressing-gown. Now run!"

I did run; I brought the candle which still remained in the gallery. He took it from my hand, held it up, and surveyed the bed, all blackened and scorched, the sheets drenched, the carpet round swimming in water.

"What is it? and who did it?" he asked.

I briefly related to him what had transpired: the strange laugh I had heard in the gallery; the step ascending to the third story; the smoke, the smell of fire which had conducted me to his room; in what state I had found matters there, and how I had deluged him with all the water I could lay hands on.

He listened very gravely; his face, as I went on, expressed more concern than astonishment; he did not immediately speak when I had concluded.

"Shall I call Mrs. Fairfax?" I asked.

"Mrs. Fairfax? No: what the deuce would you call her for? What can she do? Let her sleep unmolested."

"Then I will fetch Leah, and wake John and his wife."

"Not at all: just be still. You have a shawl on? if you are not warm enough, you may take my cloak yonder; wrap it about you, and sit down in the arm-chair: there—I will put it on. Now place your feet on the stool, to keep them out of the wet. I am going to leave you a few minutes. I shall take the candle. Remain where you are till I return; be as still as a mouse. I must pay a visit to the third story. Don't move, remember, or call anyone."

He went: I watched the light withdraw. He passed up the gallery very softly, unclosed the staircase door with as little noise as possible, shut it after him, and the last ray vanished. I was left in total darkness. I listened for some noise, but heard nothing. A very long time elapsed. I grew weary: it was cold, in spite of the cloak; and then I did not see the use of staying, as I was not to rouse the house. I was on the point of risking Mr. Rochester's displeasure, by disobeying his orders, when the light once more gleamed dimly on the gallery-wall, and I heard his unshod feet tread the matting. "I hope it is he," thought I, "and not something worse."

He re-entered, pale and very gloomy. "I have found it all out," said he, setting his candle down on the washstand; "it is as I thought."

"How, sir?"

He made no reply, but stood with his arms folded, looking on the ground. At the end of a few minutes, he inquired in rather a peculiar tone:

"I forgot whether you said you saw anything when you opened your chamber door."

"No, sir, only the candlestick on the ground."

"But you heard an odd laugh? You have heard that laugh before, I should think, or something like it?"

"Yes, sir: there is a woman who sews here, called Grace Poole—she laughs in that way. She is a singular person."

"Just so. Grace Poole—you have guessed it. She is, as you say, singular—very. Well, I shall reflect on the subject. Meantime, I am glad that you are the only person, besides myself, acquainted with the precise details of tonight's incident. You are no talking fool: say nothing about it. I will account for this state of affairs (pointing to the bed): and now return to your own room. I shall do very well on the sofa in the library for the rest of the night. It is near four—in two hours the servants will be up."

"Good-night, then, sir," said I, departing.

He seemed surprised—very inconsistently so, as he had just told me to go.

"What!" he exclaimed, "are you quitting me already: and in that way?"

"You said I might go, sir."

"But not without taking leave; not without a word or two of acknowledgment and good will: not, in short, in that brief, dry fashion.

Why, you have saved my life!—snatched me from a horrible and excruciating death!—and you walk past me as if we were mutual strangers! At least shake hands."

He held out his hand; I gave him mine: he took it first in one, then in both his own.

"You have saved my life: I have a pleasure in owing you so immense a debt. I cannot say more. Nothing else that has being would have been tolerable to me in the character of creditor for such an obligation: but you: it is different—I feel your benefits no burden, Jane."

He paused; gazed at me; words almost visible trembled on his lips—but his voice was checked.

"Good-night again, sir. There is no debt, benefit, burden, obligation, in the case."

"I knew," he continued, "you would do me good in some way, at some time; I saw it in your eyes when I first beheld you: their expression and smile did not—(again he stopped)—did not (he proceeded hastily) strike delight to my very inmost heart so for nothing. . . . My cherished preserver, good-night!"

Strange energy was in his voice; strange fire in his look.

"I am glad I happened to be awake," I said: and then I was going. "What! you will go?"

"I am cold. sir."

"Cold? Yes,—and standing in a pool! Go, then, Jane; go!" But he still retained my hand, and I could not free it. I bethought myself of an expedient.

"I think I hear Mrs. Fairfax move, sir," said 1.

"Well, leave me:" he relaxed his fingers, and I was gone.

I regained my couch, but never thought of sleep. Till morning dawned I was tossed on a buoyant but unquiet sea, where billows of trouble rolled under surges of joy. I thought sometimes I saw beyond its wild waters a shore, sweet as the hills of Beulah; and now and then a freshening gale, wakened by hope, bore my spirit triumphantly toward the bourne: but I could not reach it, even in fancy—a counteracting breeze blew off land, and continually drove me back. Sense would resist delirium: judgment would warn passion. Too feverish to rest, I rose as soon as day dawned.

CHAPTER 16

[The next day Jane saw nothing of Mr. Rochester. Passing by his room toward dinner time she found that everything had been restored to normal except the bed curtains; Grace Poole sat in the room sewing rings on them. In questioning the seamstress about the fire, which had been described to the servants as the result of their master's reading in bed, Jane had the strong impression that Grace was on her guard, as though she knew more than she was willing to admit. Moreover, she seemed to be seeking to discover Jane's habits as well as what she knew of the previous night. Jane resolved thenceforth to bolt her bedroom door at night.

At tea Jane learned from Mrs. Fairfax that their employer had left Thornfield right after breakfast, to make an extended visit among the county families. As Jane listened to the housekeeper's description of the daughters of those families she pronounced herself a fool for thinking she could ever have been important to Mr. Rochester. To prevent her wishful thinking from again leading her to forget facts, Jane drew an unadorned portrait of herself and put it for contrast beside a miniature she painted of the loveliest girl she could imagine.]

CHAPTER 17

M R. ROCHESTER had been absent upward of a fortnight, when the post brought Mrs. Fairfax a letter.

"It is from the master," said she, as she looked at the direction. "Now I suppose we shall know whether we are to expect his return or not."

And while she broke the seal and perused the document, I went on taking my coffee we were at breakfast): it was hot, and I attributed to that circumstance a fiery glow which suddenly rose to my face. Why my hand shook, and why I involuntarily spilled half the contents of my cup into my saucer, I did not choose to consider.

"Well-I sometimes think we are too quiet; but we run a chance

of being busy enough now: for a little while at least," said Mrs. Fairfax, still holding the note before her spectacles.

Ere I permitted myself to request an explanation, I tied the string of Adèle's pinafore, which happened to be loose; having helped her also to another bun and refilled her mug with milk, I said, nonchalantly:

"Mr. Rochester is not likely to return soon, I suppose?"

"Indeed, he is—in three days, he says; that will be next Thursday; and not alone either. I don't know how many of the fine people at the Leas are coming with him; he sends directions for all the best bedrooms to be prepared; and the library and drawing rooms are to be cleaned out; and I am to get more kitchen hands from the George Inn, at Millcote, and from wherever else I can; and the ladies will bring their maids and the gentlemen their valets: so we shall have a full house of it." And Mrs. Fairfax swallowed her breakfast and hastened away to commence operations.

The three days were, as she had foretold, busy enough. I had thought all the rooms at Thornfield beautifully clean and well arranged: but it appears I was mistaken. Three women were got to help; and such scrubbing, such brushing, such washing of paint and beating of carpets, such taking down and putting up of pictures, such polishing of mirrors and lusters, such lighting of fires in bedrooms, such airing of sheets and feather-beds on hearths, I never beheld, either before or since. Adèle ran quite wild in the midst of it: the preparations for company and the prospect of their arrival, seemed to throw her into ecstasies. She would have Sophie to look over all her "toilettes," as she called frocks; to furbish up any that were "passées," and to air and arrange the new. For herself, she did nothing but caper about in the front chambers, jump on and off the bedsteads, and lie on the mattresses and piled-up bolsters and pillows before the enormous fires roaring in the chimneys. From school duties she was exonerated: Mrs. Fairfax had pressed me into her service, and I was all day in the store-room, helping (or hindering) her and the cook; learning to make custards and cheesecakes and French pastry, to truss game and garnish dessert dishes.

The party were expected to arrive on Thursday afternoon, in time for dinner at six. During the intervening period I had no time to nurse chimeras; and I believe I was as active and gay as anybody —Adèle excepted. Still, now and then, I received a damping check to my cheerfulness; and was, in spite of myself, thrown back on the

region of doubts and portents, and dark conjectures. This was when I chanced to see the third story staircase door (which of late had always been kept locked) open slowly, and give passage to the form of Grace Poole, in prim cap, white apron, and handkerchief; when I watched her glide along the gallery, her quiet tread muffled in a list slipper; when I saw her look into the bustling, topsy-turvy bedrooms,—just say a word, perhaps, to the charwoman about the proper way to polish a grate, or clean a marble mantel-piece, or take stains from papered walls, and then pass on. She would thus descend to the kitchen once a day, eat her dinner, smoke a moderate pipe on the hearth, and go back, carrying her pot of porter with her, for her private solace, in her own gloomy, upper haunt. Only one hour in the twenty-four did she pass with her fellow-servants below; all the rest of her time was spent in some low-ceiled, oaken chamber of the third story: there she sat and sewed—and probably laughed drearily to herself—as companionless as a prisoner in his dungeon.

The strangest thing of all was, that not a soul in the house, except me, noticed her habits, or seemed to marvel at them; no one discussed her position or employment; no one pitied her solitude or isolation. I once, indeed, overheard part of a dialogue between Leah and one of the charwomen, of which Grace formed the subject, Leah had been saying something I had not caught, and the charwoman remarked:

"She gets good wages, I guess?"

"Yes," said Leah; "I wish I had as good; not that mine are to complain of—there's no stinginess at Thornfield; but they're not one-fifth of the sum Mrs. Poole receives. And she is laying by: she goes every quarter to the bank at Millcote. I should not wonder but she has saved enough to keep her independent if she liked to leave; but I suppose she's got used to the place; and then she's not forty yet, and strong and able for anything. It is too soon for her to give up business."

"She is a good hand, I daresay," said the charwoman.
"Ah! she understands what she has to do—nobody better," rejoined Leah significantly; "and it is not everyone could fill her shoes; not for all the money she gets."

"That it is not!" was the reply. "I wonder whether master-"

The charwoman was going on; but here Leah turned and perceived me, and she instantly gave her companion a nudge.

"Doesn't she know?" I heard the woman whisper.

Leah shook her head, and the conversation was of course dropped. All I had gathered from it amounted to this—that there was a mystery at Thornfield; and that from participation in that mystery, I was purposely excluded.

Thursday came: all work had been completed the previous evening; carpets were laid down, bed-hangings festooned, radiant white counterpanes spread, toilet tables arranged, furniture rubbed, flowers piled in vases: both chambers and saloons looked as fresh and bright as hands could make them. The hall, too, was scoured; and the great carved clock, as well as the steps and banisters of the staircase, were polished to the brightness of glass: in the dining room, the sideboard flashed resplendent with plate; in the drawing room and boudoir, vases of exotics bloomed on all sides.

Afternoon arrived: Mrs. Fairfax assumed her best black satin gown, her gloves, and her gold watch; for it was her part to receive the company, to conduct the ladies to their rooms, etc. Adèle, too, would be dressed: though I thought she had little chance of being introduced to the party that day at least. However, to please her, I allowed Sophie to apparel her in one of her short, full muslin frocks. For myself, I had no need to make any change; I should not be called upon to quit my sanctum of the schoolroom; for a sanctum it was now become to me—"a very pleasant refuge in time of trouble."

It had been a mild, serene spring day; one of those days which, toward the end of March or the beginning of April, rise shining over the earth as heralds of summer. It was drawing to an end now; but the evening was even warm, and I sat at work in the schoolroom with the window open.

"It gets late," said Mrs. Fairfax, entering in rustling state. "I am glad I ordered dinner an hour after the time Mr. Rochester mentioned; for it is past six now. I have sent John down to the gates to see if there is anything on the road: one can see a long way from thence in the direction of Millcote." She went to the window. "Here he is!" said she. "Well, John," (leaning out) "any news?"

"They're coming, ma'am," was the answer. "They'll be here in

ten minutes."

Adèle flew to the window. I followed; taking care to stand on one side, so that, screened by the curtain, I could see without being seen.

The ten minutes John had given seemed very long, but at last wheels were heard; four equestrians galloped up the drive, and after them came two open carriages. Fluttering veils and waving plumes filled the vehicles; two of the cavaliers were young, dashing-looking gentlemen; the third was Mr. Rochester, on his black horse, Mesrour, Pilot bounding before him: at his side rode a lady, and he and she were the first of the party. Her purple riding-habit almost swept the ground, her veil streamed long on the breeze; mingling with its transparent folds, and gleaming through them shone rich raven ringlets.

"Miss Ingram!" exclaimed Mrs. Fairfax, and away she hurried to her post below.

The cavalcade, following the sweep of the drive, quickly turned the angle of the house, and I lost sight of it. Adèle now petitioned to go down; but I took her on my knee and gave her to understand that she must not on any account think of venturing in sight of the ladies, either now or at any other time, unless expressly sent for: that Mr. Rochester would be very angry, etc. "Some natural tears she shed" on being told this; but as I began to look very grave, she consented at last to wipe them.

A joyous stir was now audible in the hall: gentlemen's deep tones, and ladies' silvery accents blended harmoniously together, and distinguishable above all, though not loud, was the sonorous voice of the master of Thornfield Hall, welcoming his fair and gallant guests under its roof. Then light steps ascended the stairs; and there was a tripping through the gallery, and soft cheerful laughs, and opening and closing doors, and, for a time, a hush.

"Elles changent de toilettes," * said Adèle; who, listening attentively, had followed every movement; and she sighed.

"Chez maman," said she, "quand il y avait du monde, je le suivais partout, au salon et à leurs chambres: souvent je regardais les femmes de chambre coiffer et habiller les dames, et c'était si amusant: comme cela en apprend." †

"Don't you feel hungry, Adèle?"

"Mais oui, mademoiselle: voilà cinq ou six heures que nous n'avons pas mangé." ‡

"Well now, while the ladies are in their rooms, I will venture down and get you something to eat."

^{* &}quot;They're changing."

^{† &}quot;At mama's," she said, "when people came, I followed them everywhere, to the drawing rooms and the bedrooms; often I watched the maids dress the ladies and arrange their hair, and it was so much fun; that's the way one learns." ‡ "Yes, Mademoiselle; we haven't eaten for five or six hours."

And issuing from my asylum with precaution, I sought a back-stairs which conducted directly to the kitchen. All in that region was fire and commotion; the soup and fish were in the last stage of projection, and the cook hung over her crucibles in a frame of mind and body threatening spontaneous combustion. In the servants' hall two coachmen and three gentlemen's gentlemen stood or sat round the fire; the Abigails, I suppose, were upstairs with their mistresses: the new servants that had been hired from Millcote, were bustling about everywhere. Threading this chaos, I at last reached the larder; there I took possession of a cold chicken, a roll of bread, some tarts, a plate or two and a knife and fork: with this booty I made a hasty retreat. I had regained the gallery, and was just shutting the back door behind me, when an accelerated hum warned me that the ladies were about to issue from their chambers. I could not proceed to the school-room without passing some of their doors, and running the risk of being surprised with my cargo of victualage; so I stood still at this end, which, being windowless, was dark: quite dark now, for the sun was set and twilight gathering.

Presently the chambers gave up their fair tenants one after another: each came out gaily and airily, with dress that gleamed lustrous through the dusk. For a moment they stood grouped together at the other extremity of the gallery, conversing in a key of sweet subdued vivacity: they then descended the staircase almost as noiselessly as a bright mist rolls down a hill. Their collective appearance had left on me an impression of high-born elegance, such as I had never before received.

I found Adèle peeping through the school-room door, which she held ajar. "What beautiful ladies!" cried she in English. "Oh, I wish I might go to them! Do you think Mr. Rochester will send for us by-and-bye, after dinner?"

"No, indeed, I don't; Mr. Rochester has something else to think about. Never mind the ladies tonight; perhaps you will see them tomorrow: here is your dinner."

She was really hungry, so the chicken and tarts served to divert her attention for a time. It was well I secured this forage; or both she, I and Sophie, to whom I conveyed a share of our repast, would have run a chance of getting no dinner at all: everyone downstairs was too much engaged to think of us. The dessert was not carried out till after nine; and at ten, footmen were still running to and fro with trays and coffee-cups. I allowed Adèle to sit up much later than

usual; for she declared she could not possibly go to sleep while the doors kept opening and shutting below, and people bustling about. Besides, she added, a message might possibly come from Mr. Rochester when she was undressed; "et alors quel dommage!" *

I told her stories as long as she would listen to them; and then for a change I took her out into the gallery. The hall lamp was now lit, and it amused her to look over the balustrade and watch the servants passing backward and forward. When the evening was far advanced, a sound of music issued from the drawing-room, whither the piano had been removed; Adèle and I sat down on the top step of the stairs to listen. Presently a voice blent with the rich tones of the instrument; it was a lady who sang, and very sweet her notes were. The solo over, a duet followed, and then a glee: a joyous conversational murmur filled up the intervals. I listened long: suddenly I discovered that my ear was wholly intent on analyzing the mingled sounds, and trying to discriminate amidst the confusion of accents those of Mr. Rochester; and when it caught them, which it soon did, it found a further task in framing the tones, rendered by distance inarticulate, into words.

The clock struck eleven. I looked at Adèle, whose head leaned against my shoulder; her eyes were waxing heavy, so I took her up in my arms and carried her off to bed. It was near one before the gentlemen and ladies sought their chambers.

The next day was as fine as its predecessor; it was devoted by the party to an excursion to some site in the neighborhood. They set out early in the forenoon, some on horseback, the rest in carriages; I witnessed both the departure and the return. Miss Ingram, as before, was the only lady equestrian; and, as before, Mr. Rochester galloped at her side; the two rode a little apart from the rest. I pointed out this circumstance to Mrs. Fairfax, who was standing at the window with me:

"You said it was not likely they should think of being married," said I, "but you see Mr. Rochester evidently prefers her to any of the other ladies."

"Yes; I daresay: no doubt he admires her."

"And she him," I added; "look how she leans her head toward him as if she were conversing confidentially; I wish I could see her face; I have never had a glimpse of it yet."

"You will see her this evening," answered Mrs. Fairfax. "I hap-

^{* &}quot;And what a shame [that would be]."

pened to remark to Mr. Rochester how much Adèle wished to be introduced to the ladies, and he said: 'Oh! let her come into the drawing room after dinner; and request Miss Eyre to accompany her.'"

"Yes—he said that from mere politeness: I need not go, I am sure," I answered.

"Well—I observed to him that as you were unused to company, I did not think you would like appearing before so gay a party—all strangers; and he replied, in his quick way: 'Nonsense! If she objects, tell her it is my particular wish; and if she resists, say I shall come and fetch her in case of contumacy.'"

"I will not give him that trouble," I answered. "I will go, if no better may be: but I don't like it. Shall you be there, Mrs. Fairfax?"

"No; I pleaded off, and he admitted my plea. I'll tell you how to manage so as to avoid the embarrassment of making a formal entrance, which is the most disagreeable part of the business. You must go into the drawing room while it is empty, before the ladies leave the dinner table; choose your seat in any quiet nook you like; you need not stay long after the gentlemen come in, unless you please: just let Mr. Rochester see you are there and then slip away—nobody will notice you."

"Will these people remain long, do you think?"

"Perhaps two or three weeks; certainly not more. After the Easter recess, Sir George Lynn, who was lately elected member for Millcote, will have to go up to town and take his seat; I daresay Mr. Rochester will accompany him: it surprises me that he has already made so protracted a stay at Thornfield."

[With some misgivings, Jane followed Mrs. Fairfax' advice and that evening installed Adèle and herself in an inconspicuous corner of the drawing room, to await the guests.]

A soft sound of rising now became audible; the curtain was swept back from the arch; through it appeared the dining-room, with its lit luster pouring down light on the silver and glass of a magnificent dessert-service covering a long table; a band of ladies stood in the opening; they entered, and the curtain fell behind them.

There were but eight; yet somehow as they flocked in, they gave the impression of a much larger number. Some of them were very tall, many were dressed in white, and all had a sweeping amplitude of array that seemed to magnify their persons as a mist magnifies the moon. I rose and curtseyed to them: one or two bent their heads in return; the others only stared at me.

They dispersed about the room; reminding me, by the lightness and buoyancy of their movements, of a flock of white plumy birds. Some of them threw themselves in half-reclining positions on the sofas and ottomans: some bent over the tables and examined the flowers and books: the rest gathered in a group round the fire: all talked in a low but clear tone which seemed habitual to them. I knew their names afterward, and may as well mention them now.

First, there was Mrs. Eshton and two of her daughters. She had evidently been a handsome woman, and was well preserved still. Of her daughters, the eldest, Amy, was rather little; naïve, and child-like in face and manner, and piquant in form: her white muslin dress and blue sash became her well. The second, Louisa, was taller and more elegant in figure; with a very pretty face, of that order the French term *minois chiffonné* *: both sisters were fair as lilies.

Lady Lynn was a large and stout personage of about forty; very erect, very haughty-looking, richly dressed in a satin robe of changeful sheen: her dark hair shone glossily under the shade of an azure plume, and within the circlet of a band of gems.

Mrs. Colonel Dent was less showy; but, I thought, more lady-like. She had a slight figure, a pale, gentle face, and fair hair. Her black satin dress, her scarf of rich foreign lace, and her pearl ornaments, pleased me better than the rainbow radiance of the titled dame.

But the three most distinguished—partly, perhaps, because the tallest figures of the band—were the Dowager Lady Ingram and her daughters, Blanche and Mary. They were all three of the loftiest stature of woman. The dowager might be between forty and fifty: her shape was still fine; her hair (by candlelight at least) still black; her teeth, too, were still apparently perfect. Most people would have termed her a splendid woman of her age: and so she was, no doubt, physically speaking; but then there was an expression of almost insupportable haughtiness in her bearing and countenance. She had Roman features and a double chin, disappearing into a throat like a pillar: these features appeared to me not only inflated and darkened, but even furrowed with pride; and the chin was sustained by the same principle, in a position of almost preternatural erectness. She had, likewise, a fierce and a hard eye: it reminded me of Mrs.

^{*} Pretty, but irregular

Reed's; she mouthed her words in speaking; her voice was deep, its inflections very pompous, very dogmatical—very intolerable, in short. A crimson velvet robe, and a shawl turban of some gold-wrought Indian fabric, invested her (I suppose she thought) with a truly imperial dignity.

Blanche and Mary were of equal stature—straight and tall as poplars. Mary was too slim for her height; but Blanche was molded like a Dian. I regarded her, of course, with special interest. First, I wished to see whether her appearance accorded with Mrs. Fairfax's description; secondly, whether it at all resembled the fancy miniature I had painted of her; and thirdly—it will out!—whether it were such as I should fancy likely to suit Mr. Rochester's taste.

As far as person went, she answered point for point, both to my picture and Mrs. Fairfax's description. The noble bust, the sloping shoulders, the graceful neck, the dark eyes and black ringlets were all there; but her face? Her face was like her mother's; a youthful unfurrowed likeness: the same low brow, the same high features, the same pride. It was not, however, so saturnine a pride: she laughed continually; her laugh was satirical, and so was the habitual expression of her arched and haughty lip.

Genius is said to be self-conscious: I cannot tell whether Miss Ingram was a genius, but she was self-conscious—remarkably self-conscious indeed. She entered into a discourse on botany with the gentle Mrs. Dent. It seems Mrs. Dent had not studied that science: though, as she said, she liked flowers, "especially wild ones;" Miss Ingram had, and she ran over its vocabulary with an air. I presently perceived she was (what is vernacularly termed) trailing Mrs. Dent; that is, playing on her ignorance: her trail might be clever, but it was decidedly not good-natured. She played: her execution was brilliant; she sang: her voice was fine; she talked French apart to her mama; and she talked it well, with fluency and with a good accent.

Mary had a milder and more open countenance than Blanche; softer features too, and a skin some shades fairer (Miss Ingram was dark as a Spaniard)—but Mary was deficient in life: her face lacked expression, her eye luster; she had nothing to say, and having once taken her seat, remained fixed like a statue in its niche. The sisters were both attired in spotless white.

And did I now think Miss Ingram such a choice as Mr. Rochester would be likely to make? I could not tell—I did not know his taste

in female beauty. If he liked the majestic, she was the very type of majesty: then she was accomplished, sprightly. Most gentlemen would admire her, I thought; and that he *did* admire her, I already seemed to have obtained proof: to remove the last shade of doubt, it remained but to see them together.

You are not to suppose, reader, that Adèle has all this time been sitting motionless on the stool at my feet: no; when the ladies entered, she rose, advanced to meet them, made a stately reverence, and said, with gravity,

"Bonjour, mesdames."

And Miss Ingram had looked down at her with a mocking air, and exclaimed, "Oh, what a little puppet!"

Lady Lynn had remarked, "It is Mr. Rochester's ward, I suppose—the little French girl he was speaking of."

Mrs. Dent had kindly taken her hand, and given her a kiss. Amy and Louisa Eshton had cried out simultaneously—

"What a love of a child!"

And then they had called her to a sofa, where she now sat, ensconced between them, chattering alternately in French and broken English; absorbing not only the young ladies' attention, but that of Mrs. Eshton and Lady Lynn, and getting spoiled to her heart's content.

At last coffee is brought in, and the gentlemen are summoned. I sit in the shade—if any shade there be in this brilliantly-lit apartment; the window-curtain half hides me. Again the arch yawns: they come. The collective appearance of the gentlemen, like that of the ladies, is very imposing: they are all costumed in black; most of them are tall, some young. Henry and Frederick Lynn are very dashing sparks, indeed; and Colonel Dent is a fine soldierly man. Mr. Eshton, the magistrate of the district, is gentleman-like: his hair is quite white, his eyebrows and whiskers still dark, which gives him something of the appearance of a père noble de théâtre.* Lord Ingram, like his sisters, is very tall; like them, also, he is handsome; but he shares Mary's apathetic and listless look: he seems to have more length of limb than vivacity of blood or vigor of brain.

And where is Mr. Rochester?

He comes in at last: I am not looking at the arch, yet I see him enter. I try to concentrate my attention on those netting-needles, on the meshes of the purse I am forming—I wish to think only of the

^{* &}quot;Heavy" stage father

work I have in my hands, to see only the silver beads and silk threads that lie in my lap; whereas, I distinctly behold his figure, and I inevitably recall the moment when I last saw it: just after I had rendered him, what he deemed, an essential service—and he, holding my hand, and looking down on my face, surveyed me with eyes that revealed a heart full and eager to overflow; in whose emotions I had a part. How near had I approached him at that moment! What had occurred since, calculated to change his and my relative positions? Yet now, how distant, how far estranged we were! So far estranged, that I did not expect him to come and speak to me. I did not wonder, when, without looking at me, he took a seat at the other side of the room, and began conversing with some of the ladies.

No sooner did I see that his attention was riveted on them, and that I might gaze without being observed, than my eyes were drawn involuntarily to his face: I could not keep their lids under control: they would rise and the irises would fix on him. I looked, and had an acute pleasure in looking—a precious, yet poignant pleasure; pure gold, with a steely point of agony: a pleasure like what the thirst-perishing man might feel who knows the well to which he has crept is poisoned, yet stoops and drinks divine draughts nevertheless.

Most true it is that "beauty is in the eye of the gazer." My master's colorless, olive face, square, massive brow, broad and jetty eyebrows, deep eyes, strong features, firm, grim mouth—all energy, decision, will—were not beautiful, according to rule; but they were more than beautiful to me: they were full of an interest, an influence that quite mastered me, that took my feelings from my own power and fettered them in his. I had not intended to love him: the reader knows I have wrought hard to extirpate from my soul the germs of love there detected; and now, at the first renewed view of him, they spontaneously revived, green and strong! He made me love him without looking at me.

I compared him with his guests. What was the gallant grace of the Lynns, the languid elegance of Lord Ingram, even the military distinction of Colonel Dent, contrasted with his look of native pith and genuine power? I had no sympathy in their appearance, their expression: yet I could imagine that most observers would call them attractive, handsome, imposing; while they would pronounce Mr. Rochester at once harsh-featured and melancholy-looking. I saw them smile, laugh—it was nothing: the light of the candles had as much soul in it as their smile; the tinkle of the bell as much significance as

their laugh. I saw Mr. Rochester smile: his stern features softened; his eye grew both brilliant and gentle, its ray both searching and sweet. He was talking, at the moment, to Louisa and Amy Eshton. I wondered to see them receive with calm that look which seemed to me so penetrating: I expected their eyes to fall, their color to rise under it; yet I was glad when I found they were in no sense moved. "He is not to them what he is to me," I thought: "he is not of their kind. I believe he is of mine; I am sure he is—I feel akin to him—I understand the language of his countenance and movements: though rank and wealth sever us widely, I have something in my brain and heart, in my blood and nerves, that assimilates me mentally to him. Did I say, a few days since, that I had nothing to do with him but to receive my salary at his hands? Did I forbid myself to think of him in any other light than as a paymaster? Blasphemy against nature! Every good, true, vigorous feeling I have, gathers impulsively round him. I know I must conceal my sentiments: I must smother hope; I must remember that he cannot care much for me. For when I say that I am of his kind, I do not mean that I have his force to influence, and his spell to attract: I mean only that I have certain tastes and feelings in common with him. I must, then, repeat continually that we are for ever sundered; and yet, while I breathe and think I must love him."

Coffee is handed. The ladies, since the gentlemen entered, have become lively as larks; conversation waxes brisk and merry. Colonel Dent and Mr. Eshton argue on politics; their wives listen. The two proud dowagers, Lady Lynn and Lady Ingram, confabulate together. Sir George—whom, by-the-by, I have forgotten to describe—a very big, and very fresh-looking country gentleman, stands before their sofa, coffee-cup in hand, and occasionally puts in a word. Mr. Frederick Lynn had taken a seat beside Mary Ingram, and is showing her the engravings of a splendid volume: she looks, smiles now and then, but apparently says little. The tall and phlegmatic Lord Ingram leans with folded arms on the chairback of the little and lively Amy Eshton; she glances up at him, and chatters like a wren: she likes him better than she does Mr. Rochester. Henry Lynn has taken possession of an ottoman at the feet of Louisa; Adèle shares it with him: he is trying to talk French with her, and Louisa laughs at his blunders. With whom will Blanche Ingram pair? She is standing alone at the table, bending gracefully over an album. She seems waiting to be sought; but she will not wait too long: she herself selects a mate.

Mr. Rochester, having quitted the Eshtons, stands on the hearth as solitary as she stands by the table: she confronts him, taking her station on the opposite side of the mantelpiece.

"Mr. Rochester, I thought you were not fond of children?"

"Nor am I."

"Then, what induced you to take charge of such a little doll as that?" (pointing to Adèle). "Where did you pick her up?"

"I did not pick her up, she was left on my hands."

"You should have sent her to school."

"I could not afford it: schools are so dear."

"Why, I suppose you have a governess for her: I saw a person with her just now—is she gone? Oh, no! there she is still behind the window-curtain. You pay her, of course; I should think it quite as expensive—more so; for you have them both to keep in addition."

I feared—or should I say, hoped?—the allusion to me would make Mr. Rochester glance my way; and I involuntarily shrank further into the shade: but he never turned his eyes.

"I have not considered the subject," said he indifferently, looking straight before him.

"No—you men never do consider economy and commonsense. You should hear mama on the chapter of governesses: Mary and I have had, I should think, a dozen at least in our day; half of them detestable and the rest ridiculous, and all incubi—were they not, mama?"

"Did you speak, my own?"

The young lady thus claimed as the dowager's special property, reiterated her question with an explanation.

"My dearest, don't mention governesses; the word makes me nervous. I have suffered a martyrdom from their incompetency and caprice; I thank Heaven I have now done with them!"

Mrs. Dent here bent over to the pious lady, and whispered something in her ear; I suppose from the answer elicited, it was a reminder that one of the anathematized race was present.

"Tant pis! *" said her ladyship, "I hope it may do her good!" Then, in a lower tone, but still loud enough for me to hear, "I noticed her; I am a judge of physiognomy, and in hers I see all the faults of her class."

"What are they, madam?" inquired Mr. Rochester aloud.

^{*} Too bad!

"I will tell you in your private ear," replied she, wagging her turban three times with portentous significancy.

"But my curiosity will be past its appetite; it craves food now."
"Ask Blanche; she is nearer you than I."

"Oh, don't refer him to me, mama! I have just one word to say of the whole tribe; they are a nuisance. Not that I ever suffered much from them; I took care to turn the tables. What tricks Theodore and I used to play on our Miss Wilsons, and Mrs. Greys, and Madame Jouberts! Mary was always too sleepy to join in a plot with spirit. The best fun was with Madame Joubert: Miss Wilson was a poor sickly thing, lachrymose and low-spirited: not worth the trouble of vanquishing, in short; and Mrs. Grey was coarse and insensible: no blow took effect on her. But poor Madame Joubert! I see her yet in her raging passions, when we had driven her to extremities—spilled our tea, crumbled our bread and butter, tossed our books up to the ceiling, and played a charivari with the ruler and desk, the fender and fire-irons. Theodore, do you remember those merry days?"

"Yaas, to be sure I do," drawled Lord Ingram; "and the poor old stick used to cry out 'Oh you villains childs!'—and then we sermonized her on the presumption of attempting to teach such clever blades as we were, when she was herself so ignorant."

"We did; and Tedo, you know, I helped you in prosecuting (or persecuting) your tutor, whey-faced Mr. Vining—the parson in the pip, as we used to call him. He and Miss Wilson took the liberty of falling in love with each other—at least Tedo and I thought so; we surprised sundry tender glances and sighs which we interpreted as tokens of 'la belle passion,' and I promise you the public soon had the benefit of our discovery: we employed it as a sort of lever to hoist our dead-weights from the house. Dear mama, there, as soon as she got an inkling of the business, found out that it was of an immoral tendency. Did you not, my lady-mother?"

"Certainly, my best. And I was quite right; depend on that: there are a thousand reasons why liaisons between governesses and tutors should never be tolerated a moment in any well-regulated house; firstly—"

"Oh gracious, mama! Spare us the enumeration! Au reste, we all know them: danger of bad example to innocence of childhood; distractions and consequent neglect of duty on the part of the attached—mutual alliance and reliance; confidence thence resulting—in-

solence accompanying—mutiny and general blow-up. Am I right, Baroness Ingram, of Ingram Park?"

"My lily-flower, you are right now, as always."

"Then no more need be said: change the subject."

Amy Eshton, not hearing or not heeding this dictum, joined in with her soft, infantine tone: "Louisa and I used to quiz our governess too; but she was such a good creature, she would bear anything: nothing put her out. She was never cross with us; was she, Louisa?"

"No, never: we might do what we pleased; ransack her desk and her work-box, and turn her drawers inside out; and she was so goodnatured, she would give us anything we asked for."

"I suppose, now," said Miss Ingram, curling her lip sarcastically, "we shall have an abstract of the memoirs of all the governesses extant: in order to avert such a visitation, I again move the introduction of a new topic. Mr. Rochester, do you second my motion?"

"Madam, I support you on this point as on every other."

"Then on me be the onus of bringing it forward. Signior Eduardo, are you in voice to-night?"

"Donna Bianca, if you command it, I will be."

"Then, signior, I lay on you my sovereign behest to furbish up your lungs and other vocal organs, as they will be wanted on my royal service."

"Who would not be the Rizzio of so divine a Mary?"

"A fig for Rizzio!" cried she, tossing her head with all its curls, as she moved to the piano. "It is my opinion the fiddler David must have been an insipid sort of fellow: I like black Bothwell better: to my mind a man is nothing without a spice of the devil in him; and history may say what it will of James Hepburn, but I have a notion, he was just the sort of wild, fierce, bandit hero whom I could have consented to gift with my hand."

"Gentlemen, you hear! Now which of you most resembles Bothwell?" cried Mr. Rochester.

"I should say the preference lies with you," responded Colonel Dent.

"On my honor, I am much obliged to you," was the reply.

Miss Ingram, who had now seated herself with proud grace at the piano, spreading out her snowy robes in queenly amplitude, commenced a brilliant prelude; talking meantime. She appeared to be on her high horse tonight; both her words and her air seemed in-

tended to excite not only the admiration, but the amazement of her auditors: she was evidently bent on striking them as something very dashing and daring indeed.

"Oh, I am so sick of the young men of the present day!" exclaimed she, rattling away at the instrument. "Poor, puny things not fit to stir a step beyond papa's park-gates: nor to go even so far without mama's permission and guardianship! Creatures so absorbed in care about their pretty faces and their white hands, and their small feet; as if a man had anything to do with beauty! As if loveliness were not the special prerogative of woman—her legitimate appanage and heritage! I grant an ugly woman is a blot on the fair face of creation; but as to the gentlemen, let them be solicitous to possess only strength and valor: let their motto be: Hunt, shoot, and fight: the rest is not worth a fillip. Such should be my device, were I a man."

"Whenever I marry," she continued after a pause which none interrupted, "I am resolved my husband shall not be a rival, but a foil to me. I will suffer no competitor near the throne; I shall exact an undivided homage: his devotions shall not be shared between me and the shape he sees in his mirror. Mr. Rochester, now sing, and I will play for you."

"I am all obedience," was the response.

"Here then is a Corsair-song. Know that I dote on Corsairs; and for that reason, sing it 'con spirito.'"

"Commands from Miss Ingram's lips would put spirit into a mug of milk and water."

"Take care, then: if you don't please me, I will shame you by showing how such things should be done."

"That is offering a premium on incapacity: I shall now endeavor to fail."

"Gardez-vous en bien! If you err willfully, I shall devise a proportionate punishment."

"Miss Ingram ought to be clement, for she has it in her power to inflict a chastisement beyond mortal endurance."

"Ha! explain!" commanded the lady.

"Pardon me, madam: no need of explanation; your own fine sense must inform you that one of your frowns would be a sufficient substitute for capital punishment."

"Sing!" said she, and again touching the piano, she commenced an accompaniment in spirited style.

"Now is my time to slip away," thought I: but the tones that then

severed the air arrested me. Mrs. Fairfax had said Mr. Rochester possessed a fine voice: he did—a mellow, powerful bass, into which he threw his own feeling, his own force; finding a way through the ear to the heart, and there waking sensation strangely. I waited till the last deep and full vibration had expired—till the tide of talk, checked an instant, had resumed its flow; I then quitted my sheltered corner and made my exit by the side-door, which was fortunately near. Thence a narrow passage led into the hall: in crossing it, I perceived my sandal was loose; I stopped to tie it, kneeling down for that purpose on the mat at the foot of the staircase. I heard the dining room door unclose; a gentleman came out; rising hastily, I stood face to face with him: it was Mr. Rochester.

"How do you do?" he asked.

"I am very well, sir."

"Why did you not come and speak to me in the room?"

I thought I might have retorted the question on him who put it: but I would not take that freedom. I answered:

"I did not wish to disturb you, as you seemed engaged, sir."

"What have you been doing during my absence?"

"Nothing particular; teaching Adèle as usual."

"And getting a good deal paler than you were—as I saw at first sight. What is the matter?"

"Nothing at all, sir."

"Did you take any cold that night you half drowned me?"

"Not the least."

"Return to the drawing room: you are deserting too early."

"I am tired, sir."

He looked at me for a minute.

"And a little depressed," he said. "What about? Tell me."

"Nothing-nothing, sir. I am not depressed."

"But I affirm that you are: so much depressed that a few more words would bring tears to your eyes—indeed, they are there now, shining and swimming; and a bead has slipped from the lash and fallen on to the flag. If I had time, and was not in mortal dread of some prating prig of a servant passing, I would know what all this means. Well, tonight I excuse you; but understand that so long as my visitors stay, I expect you to appear in the drawing room every evening; it is my wish; don't neglect it. Now go, and send Sophie for Adèle. Good-night, my——" He stopped, bit his lip, and abruptly left me.

[Merry days followed at Thornfield. There was life everywhere and movement all day long. Jane continued to appear in the drawing room as Mr. Rochester directed, though she derived no pleasure from the company, many of whom openly snubbed her. When Mr. Rochester was heard to remind Miss Ingram that she had been made his wife in the course of charades one evening, Jane's earlier suspicion that a real wedding would occur, grew to a conviction. Having learned to love her employer, she could not unlove him, and although she could never marry but for love, she told herself that Mr. Rochester had perfectly good reasons for seeking a wife for her money and connections. Miss Ingram's contempt for the governess was undisguised, yet even that failed to arouse any real jealousy in Jane. She had seen that Miss Ingram was showy but shallow and that she lacked the resources with which to charm Mr. Rochester.

Toward dusk of a wet day which Mr. Rochester had spent on business in Millcote the disgruntled guests were cheered by the sound of a vehicle approaching the house. They expected to greet their host; instead, they were confronted by a tall, fashionable-looking stranger.]

He bowed to Lady Ingram, as deeming her the eldest lady present. "It appears I come at an inopportune time, madam," said he; "when my friend, Mr. Rochester, is from home; but I arrive from a very long journey, and I think I may presume so far on old and intimate acquaintance as to install myself here till he returns."

His manner was polite; his accent, in speaking, struck me as being somewhat unusual, not precisely foreign, but still not altogether English; his age might be about Mr. Rochester's—between thirty and forty, his complexion was singularly sallow: otherwise he was a fine-looking man, at first sight especially. On closer examination, you detected something in his face that displeased; or rather, that failed to please. His features were regular, but too relaxed: his eye was large and well cut, but the life looking out of it was a tame, vacant life—at least so I thought.

The sound of the dressing-bell dispersed the party. It was not till after dinner that I saw him again: he then seemed quite at his ease. But I liked his physiognomy even less than before: it struck me as being, at the same time, unsettled and inanimate. His eye wandered, and had no meaning in its wandering: this gave him an odd look, such as I never remembered to have seen. For a handsome and not an unamiable-looking man, he repelled me exceedingly: there was no power in that smooth-skinned face of a full oval shape; no firmness in that aquiline nose, and small, cherry mouth; there was no thought on the low, even forehead; no command in that blank, brown eye.

As I sat in my usual nook, and looked at him with the light of the girandoles on the mantel-piece beaming full over him—for he occupied an armchair, drawn close to the fire, and kept shrinking still nearer, as if he were cold—I compared him with Mr. Rochester. I think (with deference be it spoken) the contrast could not be much greater between a sleek gander and a fierce falcon: between a meek sheep and the rough-coated keen-eyed dog, its guardian.

He had spoken of Mr. Rochester as an old friend. A curious friendship theirs must have been: a pointed illustration indeed, of the old adage that "extremes meet."

Two or three of the gentlemen sat near him, and I caught at times scraps of their conversation across the room. At first I could not make much sense of what I heard; for the discourse of Louisa Eshton and Mary Ingram, who sat nearer to me, confused the fragmentary sentences that reached me at intervals. These last were discussing the stranger: they both called him "a beautiful man." Louisa said he was "a love of a creature," and she "adored him": and Mary instanced his "pretty little mouth, and nice nose," as her ideal of the charming.

"And what a sweet-tempered forehead he has!" cried Louisa, "so smooth—none of those frowning irregularities I dislike so much: and such a placid eye and smile!"

And then, to my great relief, Mr. Henry Lynn summoned them to the other side of the room, to settle some point about the deferred excursion to Hay Common.

I was now able to concentrate my attention on the group by the fire, and I presently gathered that the new comer was called Mr. Mason: then I learned that he was but just arrived in England, and that he came from some hot country: which was the reason, doubtless, his face was so sallow, and that he sat so near the hearth, and wore a surtout in the house. Presently the words Jamaica, Kingston, Spanish

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Town, indicated the West Indies as his residence; and it was with no little surprise I gathered, ere long, that he had there first seen and become acquainted with Mr. Rochester. He spoke of his friend's dislike of the burning heats, the hurricanes, and rainy seasons of that region. I knew Mr. Rochester had been a traveler: Mrs. Fairfax had said so; but I thought the continent of Europe had bounded his wanderings: till now I had never heard a hint given of visits to more distant shores.

[From a footman who came to poke up the fire the guests learned of an old gypsy who had got into the chimney corner of the kitchen and absolutely refused to depart until she had told the fortunes of the young ladies. Blanche Ingram prevailed against the advice of the older members of the group, and insisted that the old woman be installed in the library, where she might be consulted by the guests individually. Blanche was the first to have her fortune told; when she returned to the drawing room it was to dismiss the whole thing as a fraud and recommend that the gypsy woman be put in the stocks as a witch. The other young ladies, who went to the library in a group, were both more believing and more communicative. They told the company of the gypsy's astonishing knowledge of the details of their lives, even of their childhood experiences. As they chattered, the footman quietly told Jane that the old woman refused to budge until Jane's fortune had been told also. Unnoticed by the others, Jane made her way to the library.]

CHAPTER 19

The LIBRARY LOOKED TRANQUIL enough as I entered it, and the Sybil—if Sybil she were, was seated snugly enough in an easy chair at the chimney corner. She had on a red cloak and a black bonnet; or rather, a broad-brimmed gypsy hat, tied down with a striped handkerchief under the chin. An extinguished candle stood on the table; she was bending over the fire, and seemed reading in a little black book, like a prayer book, by the light of the blaze: she muttered the words to herself, as most old women do, while she read; she did not desist immediately on my entrance: it appeared she wished to finish a paragraph.

I stood on the rug and warmed my hands, which were rather cold with sitting at a distance from the drawing-room fire. I felt now as composed as ever I did in my life: there was nothing indeed in the gypsy's appearance to trouble one's calm. She shut her book and slowly looked up; her hat-brim partially shaded her face, yet I could see, as she raised it, that it was a strange one. It looked all brown and black: elf-locks bristled out from beneath a white band which passed under her chin, and came half over her cheeks, or rather jaws; her eye confronted me at once, with a bold and direct gaze.

"Well, and you want your fortune told?" she said in a voice as decided as her glance, as harsh as her features.

"I don't care about it, mother; you may please yourself: but I ought to warn you, I have no faith."

"It's like your impudence to say so: I expected it of you; I heard it in your step as you crossed the threshold."

"Did you? You've a quick ear."

"I have; and a quick eye, and a quick brain."

"You need them all in your trade."

"I do; especially when I've customers like you to deal with. Why don't you tremble?"

"I'm not cold."

"Why don't you turn pale?"

"I am not sick."

"Why don't you consult my art?"

"I'm not silly."

The old crone "nichered," a laugh under her bonnet and bandage: she then drew out a short black pipe, and lighting it began to smoke. Having indulged a while in this sedative, she raised her bent body, took the pipe from her lips, and while gazing steadily at the fire, said very deliberately:

"You are cold; you are sick; and you are silly."

"Prove it," I rejoined.

"I will; in few words. You are cold, because you are alone; no contact strikes the fire from you that is in you. You are sick: because the best of feelings, the highest and the sweetest given to man, keeps far away from you. You are silly, because, suffer as you may, you will not beckon it to approach; nor will you stir one step to meet it where it waits you."

She again put her short, black pipe to her lips, and renewed her smoking with vigor.

"You might say all that to almost anyone who, you knew, lived as a solitary dependent in a great house."

"I might say it to almost anyone; but would it be true of almost anyone?"

"In my circumstances."

"Yes; just so, in your circumstances: but find me another precisely placed as you are."

"It would be easy to find you thousands."

"You could scarcely find me one. If you knew it, you are peculiarly situated: very near happiness; yes; within reach of it. The materials are all prepared; there only wants a movement to combine them. Chance laid them somewhat apart; let them be once approached and bliss results."

"I don't understand enigmas. I never could guess a riddle in my life."

"If you wish me to speak more plainly, show me your palm."

"And I must cross it with silver, I suppose?"

"To be sure."

I gave her a shilling: she put it into an old stocking-foot which she took out of her pocket, and having tied it round and returned it, she told me to hold out my hand. I did. She approached her face to the palm, and pored over it without touching it.

"It is too fine," said she. "I can make nothing of such a hand as that; almost without lines; besides, what is in a palm? Destiny is not written there."

"I believe you," said I.

"No," she continued, "it is in the face: on the forehead, about the cyes, in the eyes themselves, in the lines of the mouth. Kneel, and lift up your head."

"Ah! now you are coming to reality," I said as I obeyed her. "I shall begin to put some faith in you presently."

I knelt within half a yard of her. She stirred the fire, so that a ripple of light broke from the disturbed coal; the glare, however, as she sat, only threw her face into deeper shadow: mine, it illumined.

"I wonder with what feelings you came to me tonight," she said, when she had examined me a while. "I wonder what thoughts are busy in your heart during all the hours you sit in yonder room with the fine people flitting before you like shapes in a magic lantern: just as little sympathetic communion passing between you and them, as if

they were really mere shadows of human forms, and not the actual substance."

"I feel tired often, sleepy sometimes; but seldom sad."

"Then you have some secret hope to buoy you up and please you with whispers of the future?"

"Not I. The utmost I hope is, to save money enough out of my earnings to set up a school some day in a little house rented by myself."

"A mean nutriment for the spirit to exist on: and sitting in that window-seat (you see I know your habits)—"

"You have learned them from the servants."

"Ah! you think yourself sharp. Well—perhaps I have: to speak truth, I have an acquaintance with one of them—Mrs. Poole—"

I started to my feet when I heard the name.

"You have—have you?" thought I; "there is diablerie in the business after all, then!"

"Don't be alarmed," continued the strange being; "she's a safe hand, is Mrs. Poole: close and quiet: anyone may repose confidence in her. But, as I was saying: sitting in that window-seat, do you think of nothing but your future school? Have you no present interest in any of the company who occupy the sofas and chairs before you? Is there not one face you study? One figure whose movements you follow with, at least, curiosity?"

"I like to observe all the faces, and all the figures."

"But do you ever single one from the rest-or it may be, two?"

"I do, frequently; when the gestures or looks of a pair seem telling a tale: it amuses me to watch them."

"What tale do you like best to hear?"

"Oh, I have not much choice! They generally run on the same theme—courtship; and promise to end in the same catastrophe—marriage."

"And do you like that monotonous theme?"

"Positively, I don't care about it: it is nothing to me."

"Nothing to you? When a lady, young and full of life and health, charming with beauty and endowed with the gifts of rank and fortune, sits and smiles in the eyes of a gentleman you—"

"I what?"

"You know-and, perhaps, think well of."

"I don't know the gentlemen here. I have scarcely interchanged a

syllable with one of them; and as to thinking well of them, I consider some respectable and stately, and middle-aged, and others young, dashing, handsome and lively; but certainly they are all at liberty to be the recipients of whose smiles they please, without my feeling disposed to consider the transaction of any moment to me."

"You don't know the gentlemen here? You have not exchanged a syllable with one of them? Will you say that of the master of the house?"

"He is not at home."

"A profound remark! A most ingenious quibble! He went to Mill-cote this morning, and will be back here tonight, or tomorrow: does that circumstance exclude him from the list of your acquaintance—blot him, as it were, out of existence?"

"No: but I can scarcely see what Mr. Rochester has to do with the theme you had introduced."

"I was talking of ladies smiling in the eyes of gentlemen; and of late so many smiles have been shed into Mr. Rochester's eyes that they overflow like two cups filled above the brim: have you never remarked that?"

"Mr. Rochester has a right to enjoy the society of his guests."

"No question about his right: but have you never observed that, of all the tales told here about matrimony, Mr. Rochester has been favored with the most lively and the most continuous?"

"The eagerness of a listener quickens the tongue of a narrator." I said this rather to myself than to the gypsy; whose strange talk, voice, manner, had by this time wrapped me in a kind of dream. One unexpected sentence came from her lips after another, till I got involved in a web of mystification; and wondered what unseen spirit had been sitting for weeks by my heart watching its workings, and taking record of every pulse.

"Eagerness of a listener!" repeated she: "yes; Mr. Rochester has sat by the hour, his ear inclined to the fascinating lips that took such delight in their task of communicating; and Mr. Rochester was so willing to receive and looked so grateful for the pastime given him: you have noticed this?"

"Grateful! I cannot remember detecting gratitude in his face."

"Detecting! You have analyzed, then. And what did you detect, if not gratitude?"

I said nothing.

"You have seen love: have you not?—and, looking forward, you have seen him married, and beheld his bride happy?"

"Humph! Not exactly. Your witch's skill is rather at fault some-times."

"What the devil have you seen, then?"

"Never mind: I came here to inquire, not to confess. Is it known that Mr. Rochester is to be married?"

"Yes; and to the beautiful Miss Ingram."

"Shortly?"

"Appearances would warrant that conclusion; and, no doubt (though, with an audacity that wants chastising out of you, you seem to question it), they will be a superlatively happy pair. He must love such a handsome, noble, witty, accomplished lady; and probably she loves him: or, if not his person, at least his purse. I know she considers the Rochester estate eligible to the last degree; though (God pardon me!) I told her something on that point about an hour ago, which made her look wondrous grave: the corners of her mouth fell half an inch. I would advise her black-aviced suitor to look out: if another comes, with a longer or clearer rent-roll, he's dished—"

"But, mother, I did not come to hear Mr. Rochester's fortune: I came to hear my own; and you have told me nothing of it."

"Your fortune is yet doubtful: when I examined your face, one trait contradicted another. Chance has meted you a measure of happiness: that I know. I knew it before I came here this evening. She has laid it carefully on one side for you. I saw her do it. It depends on yourself to stretch out your hand, and take it up: but whether you will do so, is the problem I study. Kneel again on the rug."

"Don't keep me long; the fire scorches me."

I knelt. She did not stoop toward me, but only gazed, leaning back in her chair. She began muttering,

"The flame flickers in the eye; the eye shines like dew; it looks soft and full of feeling; it smiles at my jargon: it is susceptible; impression follows impression through its clear sphere; where it ceases to smile, it is sad; an unconscious lassitude weighs on the lid: that signifies melancholy resulting from loneliness. It turns from me; it will not suffer further scrutiny; it seems to deny, by a mocking glance, the truth of the discoveries I have already made, to disown the charge both of sensibility and chagrin: its pride and reserve only confirm me in my opinion. The eye is favorable.

"As to the mouth, it delights at times in laughter; it is disposed to impart all that the brain conceives; though I daresay it would be silent on much the heart experiences. Mobile and flexible, it was never intended to be compressed in the eternal silence of solitude: it is a mouth which should speak much and smile often, and have human affection for its interlocutor. That feature too is propitious.

"I see no enemy to a fortunate issue but in the brow; and that brow professes to say, 'I can live alone, if self-respect and circumstances require me so to do. I need not sell my soul to buy bliss. I have an inward treasure, born with me, which can keep me alive if all extraneous delights should be withheld; or offered only at a price I cannot afford to give.' The forehead declares, 'Reason sits firm and holds the reins, and she will not let the feelings burst away and hurry her to wild chasms. The passions may rage furiously, like true heathens, as they are; and the desires may imagine all sorts of vain things: but judgment shall still have the last word in every argument, and the casting vote in every decision. Strong wind, earthquake-shock, and fire may pass by: but I shall follow the guiding of that still small voice which interprets the dictates of conscience.'

"Well said, forehead; your declaration shall be respected. I have formed my plans—right plans I deem them—and in them I have attended to the claims of conscience, the counsels of reason. I know how soon youth would fade and bloom perish, if, in the cup of bliss offered, but one dreg of shame, or one flavor of remorse were detected; and I do not want sacrifice, sorrow, dissolution—such is not my taste. I wish to foster, not to blight—to earn gratitude, not to wring tears of blood—no, nor of brine: my harvest must be in smiles, in endearments, in sweet—That will do. I think I rave in a kind of exquisite delirium. I should wish now to protract this moment ad infinitum; but I dare not. So far I have governed myself thoroughly. I have acted as I inwardly swore I would act; but farther might try me beyond my strength. Rise, Miss Eyre: leave me; 'the play is played out.'"

Where was I? Did I wake or sleep? Had I been dreaming? Did I

Where was I? Did I wake or sleep? Had I been dreaming? Did I dream still? The old woman's voice had changed: her accent, her gesture, and all were familiar to me as my own face in a glass—as the speech of my own tongue. I got up, but did not go. I looked; I stirred the fire, and I looked again: but she drew her bonnet and her bandage closer about her face, and again beckoned me to depart. The flame illuminated her hand stretched out; roused now, and on the alert for discoveries, I at once noticed that hand. It was no more

the withered limb of eld than my own; it was a rounded supple member, with smooth fingers, symmetrically turned; a broad ring flashed on the little finger, and stooping forward, I looked at it, and saw a gem I had seen a hundred times before. Again I looked at the face; which was no longer turned from me—on the contrary, the bonnet was doffed, the bandage displaced, the head advanced.

"Well, Jane, do you know me?" asked the familiar voice.

"Only take off the red cloak, sir, and then-"

"But the string is in a knot-help me."

"Break it, sir."

"There, then—'Off, ye lendings!'" And Mr. Rochester stepped out of his disguise.

"Now, sir, what a strange idea!"

"But well carried out, eh? Don't you think so?"

"With the ladies you must have managed well."

"But not with you?"

"You did not act the character of a gypsy with me."

"What character did I act? My own?"

"No; some unaccountable one. In short, I believe you have been trying to draw me out—or in; you have been talking nonsense to make me talk nonsense. It is scarcely fair, sir."

"Do you forgive me, Jane?"

"I cannot tell till I have thought it all over. If, on reflection, I find I have fallen into no great absurdity, I shall try to forgive you; but it was not right."

"Oh! you have been very correct—very careful, very sensible."

I reflected, and thought, on the whole, I had. It was a comfort; but, indeed, I had been on my guard almost from the beginning of the interview. Something of masquerade I suspected. I knew gypsies and fortune-tellers did not express themselves as this seeming old woman had expressed herself; besides, I had noted her feigned voice, her anxiety to conceal her features. But my mind had been running on Grace Poole—that living enigma, that mystery of mysteries, as I considered her. I had never thought of Mr. Rochester.

"Well," said he, "what are you musing about? What does that grave smile signify?"

"Wonder and self-congratulation, sir. I have your permission to retire now, I suppose?"

"No; stay a moment; and tell me what the people in the drawing room yonder are doing."

"Discussing the gypsy, I daresay."

"Sit down!-Let me hear what they said about me."

"I had better not stay long, sir; it must be near eleven o'clock. Oh! are you aware, Mr. Rochester, that a stranger has arrived here since you left this morning?"

"A stranger!—no; who can it be? I expected no one; is he gone?"

"No; he said he had known you long, and that he could take the liberty of installing himself here till you returned."

"The devil he did! Did he give his name?"

"His name is Mason, sir; and he comes from the West Indies; from Spanish Town, in Jamaica, I think."

Mr. Rochester was standing near me; he had taken my hand, as if to lead me to a chair. As I spoke, he gave my wrist a convulsive grip; the smile on his lips froze: apparently a spasm caught his breath.

"Mason!—the West Indies!" he said, in the tone one might fancy a speaking automaton to enounce its single words; "Mason!—the West Indies!" he reiterated; and he went over the syllables three times, growing, in the intervals of speaking, whiter than ashes: he hardly seemed to know what he was doing.

"Do you feel ill, sir?" I inquired.

"Jane, I've got a blow; I've got a blow, Jane!" He staggered.

"Oh!-lean on me, sir."

"Jane, you offered me your shoulder once before; let me have it now."

"Yes, sir, yes; and my arm."

He sat down, and made me sit beside him. Holding my hand in both his own, he chafed it; gazing on me, at the same time, with the most troubled and dreary look.

"My little friend!" said he, "I wish I were in a quiet island with only you; and trouble, and danger, and hideous recollections removed from me."

"Can I help you, sir? I'd give my life to serve you."

"Jane, if aid is wanted, I'll seek it at your hands; I promise you that."

"Thank you, sir; tell me what to do-I'll try, at least, to do it."

"Fetch me now, Janc, a glass of wine from the dining room; they will be at supper there; and tell me if Mason is with them, and what he is doing."

I went. I found all the party in the dining-room at supper, as Mr. Rochester had said; they were not seated at table—the supper was

arranged on the side-board; each had taken what he chose, and they stood about here and there in groups, their plates and glasses in their hands. Everyone seemed in high glee; laughter and conversation were general and animated. Mr. Mason stood near the fire, talking to Colonel and Mrs. Dent, and appeared as merry as any of them. I filled a wine-glass (I saw Miss Ingram watch me frowningly as I did so: she thought I was taking a liberty, I daresay) and I returned to the library.

Mr. Rochester's extreme pallor had disappeared, and he looked once more firm and stern. He took the glass from my hand.

"Here is to your health, ministrant spirit!" he said: he swallowed the contents and returned it to me. "What are they doing, Jane?"

"Laughing and talking, sir."

"They don't look grave and mysterious, as if they had heard something strange?"

"Not at all—they are full of jests and gaiety."

"And Mason?"

"He was laughing, too."

"If all these people came in a body and spat at me, what would you do, Jane?"

"Turn them out of the room, sir, if I could."

He half smiled. "But if I were to go to them, and they only looked at me coldly, and whispered sneeringly to each other, and then dropped off and left me one by one, what then? Would you go with them?"

"I rather think not, sir: I should have more pleasure in staying with you."

"To comfort me?"

"Yes, sir, to comfort you, as well as I could."

"And if they laid you under a ban for adhering to me?"

"I, probably, should know nothing about their ban; and if I did, I should care nothing about it."

"Then, you could dare censure for my sake?"

"I could dare it for the sake of any friend who deserved my adherence as you, I am sure, do."

"Go back now into the room; step quietly up to Mason, and whisper in his ear that Mr. Rochester is come and wishes to see him: show him in here and then leave me."

"Yes, sir."

I did his behest. The company all stared at me as I passed straight

among them. I sought Mr. Mason, delivered the message, and preceded him from the room: I ushered him into the library, and then I went upstairs.

At a late hour, after I had been in bed some time, I heard the visitors repair to their chambers: I distinguished Mr. Rochester's voice, and heard him say, "This way, Mason; this is your room."

He spoke cheerfully: the gay tones set my heart at ease. I was soon asleep.

CHAPTER 20

I HAD FORGOTTEN to draw my curtain, which I usually did; and also to let down my window blind. The consequence was, that when the moon, which was full and bright (for the night was fine), came in her course to that space in the sky opposite my casement, and looked in at me through the unveiled panes, her glorious gaze roused me. Awaking in the dead of night, I opened my eyes on her disk—silver-white and crystal-clear. It was beautiful, but too solemn. I half rose, and stretched my arm to draw the curtain.

Good God! What a cry!

The night—its silence—its rest, was rent in twain by a savage, a sharp, a shrilly sound that ran from end to end of Thornfield Hall.

My pulse stopped: my heart stood still; my stretched arm was paralyzed. The cry died, and was not renewed. Indeed, whatever being uttered that fearful shriek could not soon repeat it: not the widest-winged condor on the Andes could, twice in succession, send out such a yell from the cloud shrouding his eyrie. The thing delivering such utterance must rest ere it could repeat the effort.

It came out of the third story; for it passed overhead. And overhead—yes, in the room just above my chamber-ceiling—I now heard a struggle: a deadly one it seemed from the noise; and a half-smothered voice shouted—

"Help! help!" three times rapidly.

"Will no one come?" it cried; and then, while the staggering and stamping went on wildly, I distinguished through plank and plaster:

"Rochester! Rochester! for God's sake, come!"

A chamber-door opened: some one ran, or rushed, along the

gallery. Another step stamped on the flooring above and something fell; and there was silence.

I put on some clothes, though horror shook all my limbs: I issued from my apartment. The sleepers were all aroused: ejaculations, terrified murmurs sounded in every room; door after door unclosed; one looked out and another looked out; the gallery filled. Gentlemen and ladies alike had quitted their beds; and "Oh! what is it?"—"Who is hurt?"—"What has happened?"—"Fetch a light!"—"Is it fire?"—"Are there robbers?"—"Where shall we run?" was demanded confusedly on all hands. But for the moonlight they would have been in complete darkness. They ran to and fro; they crowded together: some sobbed, some stumbled: the confusion was inextricable.

"Where the devil is Rochester?" cried Colonel Dent. "I cannot find him in his bed."

"Here! here!" was shouted in return. "Be composed, all of you: I'm coming."

And the door at the end of the gallery opened, and Mr. Rochester advanced with a candle: he had just descended from the upper story. One of the ladies ran to him directly; she seized his arm: it was Miss Ingram.

"What awful event has taken place?" said she. "Speak! let us know the worst at once!"

"But don't pull me down or strangle me," he replied: for the Misses Eshton were clinging about him now; and the two dowagers, in vast white wrappers, were bearing down on him like ships in full sail.

"All's right!—all's right!" he cried. "It's a mere rehearsal of Much Ado About Nothing. Ladies, keep off; or I shall wax dangerous."

And dangerous he looked: his black eyes darted sparks. Calming himself by an effort, he added:

"A servant has had the nightmare; that is all. She's an excitable, nervous person: she construed her dream into an apparition, or something of that sort, no doubt; and has taken a fit with fright. Now then, I must see you all back into your rooms; for, till the house is settled, she cannot be looked after. Gentlemen, have the goodness to set the ladies the example. Miss Ingram, I am sure you will not fail in evincing superiority to idle terrors. Amy and Louisa, return to your nests like a pair of doves, as you are. Mesdames" (to the dowagers), "you will take cold to a dead certainty, if you stay in this chill gallery any longer."

And so, by dint of alternate coaxing and commanding, he contrived to get them all once more enclosed in their separate dormitories. I did not wait to be ordered back to mine; but retreated unnoticed: as unnoticed as I had left it.

Not, however, to go to bed: on the contrary, I began and dressed myself carefully. The sounds I had heard after the scream, and the words that had been uttered, had probably been heard only by me; for they had proceeded from the room above mine: but they assured me that it was not a servant's dream which had thus struck horror through the house; and that the explanation Mr. Rochester had given was merely an invention framed to pacify his guests. I dressed, then, to be ready for emergencies. When dressed, I sat a long time by the window, looking out over the silent grounds and silvered fields, and waiting for I knew not what. It seemed to me that some event must follow the strange cry, struggle, and call.

No: stillness returned: each murmur and movement ceased gradually, and in about an hour Thornfield Hall was again as hushed as a desert. It seemed that sleep and night had resumed their empire. Meantime the moon declined: she was about to set. Not liking to sit in the cold and darkness, I thought I would lie down on my bed, dressed as I was. I left the window, and moved with little noise across the carpet; as I stooped to take off my shoes, a cautious hand tapped low at the door.

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"Am I wanted?" I asked.
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I obeyed. Mr. Rochester stood in the gallery, holding a light.

"I want you," he said: "come this way: take your time, and make no noise."

My slippers were thin: I could walk the matted floor as softly as a cat. He glided up the gallery and up the stairs, and stopped in the dark, low corridor of the fateful third story: I had followed and stood at his side.

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"Have you a sponge in your room?" he asked in a whisper.
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[&]quot;Are you up?" asked the voice I expected to hear, viz., my master's.

[&]quot;Yes, sir."

[&]quot;And dressed?"

[&]quot;Yes."

[&]quot;Come out, then, quietly."

[&]quot;Yes, sir."

[&]quot;Have you any salts-volatile salts?"

[&]quot;Yes."

"Go back and fetch both."

I returned, sought the sponge on the washstand, the salts in my drawer, and once more retraced my steps. He still waited; he held a key in his hand: approaching one of the small, black doors, he put it in the lock; he paused and addressed me again.

"You don't turn sick at the sight of blood?"

"I think I shall not: I have never been tried yet."

I felt a thrill while I answered him; but no coldness, and no faintness.

"Just give me your hand," he said; "it will not do to risk a fainting fit."

I put my fingers into his. "Warm and steady," was his remark: he turned the key and opened the door.

I saw a room I remembered to have seen before; the day Mrs. Fairfax showed me over the house: it was hung with tapestry; but the tapestry was now looped up in one part, and there was a door apparent, which had then been concealed. This door was open; a light shone out of the room within: I heard thence a snarling, snatching sound, almost like a dog quarreling. Mr. Rochester, putting down his candle, said to me, "Wait a minute," and he went forward to the inner apartment. A shout of laughter greeted his entrance; noisy at first, and terminating in Grace Poole's own goblin ha! ha! She then was there. He made some sort of arrangement, without speaking: though I heard a low voice address him: he came out and closed the door behind him.

"Here, Jane!" he said; and I walked round to the other side of a large bed, which with its drawn curtains concealed a considerable portion of the chamber. An easy-chair was near the bed-head: a man sat in it, dressed with the exception of his coat: he was still: his head leaned back; his eyes were closed. Mr. Rochester held the candle over him; I recognized in his pale and seemingly lifeless face—the stranger, Mason: I saw too that his linen on one side, and one arm, was almost soaked in blood.

"Hold the candle," said Mr. Rochester, and I took it; he fetched a basin of water from the washstand: "Hold that," said he. I obeyed. He took the sponge, dipped it in and moistened the corpse-like face: he asked for my smelling-bottle, and applied it to the nostrils. Mr. Mason shortly unclosed his eyes; he groaned. Mr. Rochester opened the shirt of the wounded man, whose arm and shoulder were bandaged: he sponged away blood, trickling fast down.

"Is there immediate danger?" murmured Mr. Mason.

"Pooh! No—a mere scratch. Don't be so overcome, man: bear up! I'll fetch a surgeon for you now, myself: you'll be able to be removed by morning, I hope. Jane," he continued.

"Sir?"

"I shall have to leave you in this room with this gentleman, for an hour, or perhaps two hours; you will sponge the blood as I do when it returns: if he feels faint, you will put the glass of water on that stand to his lips, and your salts to his nose. You will not speak to him on any pretext—and—Richard—it will be at the peril of your life if you speak to her: open your lips—agitate yourself—and I'll not answer for the consequences."

Again the poor man groaned: he looked as if he dared not move: fear, either of death or of something else, appeared almost to paralyze him. Mr. Rochester put the now bloody sponge into my hand, and I proceeded to use it as he had done. He watched me a second, then saying, "Remember!—No conversation," he left the room. I experienced a strange feeling as the key grated in the lock, and the sound of his retreating step ceased to be heard.

Here then I was in the third story, fastened into one of its mystic cells; night around me; a pale and bloody spectacle under my eyes and hands; a murderess hardly separated from me by a single door: yes—that was appalling—the rest I could bear; but I shuddered at the thought of Grace Poole bursting out upon me.

I must keep to my post, however. I must watch this ghastly countenance—these blue, still lips forbidden to unclose—these eyes now shut, now opening, now wandering through the room, now fixing on me, and ever glazed with the dullness of horror. I must dip my hand again and again in the basin of blood and water, and wipe away the trickling gore. I must see the light of the unsnuffed candle wane on my employment; the shadows darken on the wrought, antique tapestry round me, and grow black under the hangings of the vast old bed, and quiver strangely over the doors of a great cabinet opposite. . . .

Amidst all this, I had to listen as well as watch: to listen for the movements of the wild beast or the fiend in yonder side den. But since Mr. Rochester's visit it seemed spellbound: all the night I heard but three sounds at three long intervals—a step creak, a momentary renewal of the snarling, canine noise, and a deep human groan. . . . I had, again and again, held the water to Mason's white lips; again and again offered him the stimulating salts: my efforts seemed ineffectual: either bodily or mental suffering, or loss of blood, or all three com-

bined, were fast prostrating his strength. He moaned so, and looked so weak, wild, and lost, I feared he was dying; and I might not even speak to him!

The candle, wasted at last, went out; as it expired, I perceived streaks of grey light edging the window curtains; dawn was then approaching. Presently I heard Pilot bark far below, out of his distant kennel in the courtyard: hope revived. Nor was it unwarranted: in five minutes more the grating key, the yielding lock, warned me my watch was relieved. It could not have lasted more than two hours: many a week has seemed shorter.

Mr. Rochester entered, and with him the surgeon he had been to fetch.

"Now, Carter, be on the alert," he said to this last: "I give you but half an hour for dressing the wound, fastening the bandages, getting the patient downstairs and all."

"But is he fit to move, sir?"

"No doubt of it; it is nothing serious: he is nervous, his spirits must be kept up. Come, set to work."

Mr. Rochester drew back the thick curtain, drew up the holland blind, let in all the daylight he could; and I was surprised and cheered to see how far dawn was advanced: what rosy streaks were beginning to brighten the east. Then he approached Mason, whom the surgeon was already handling.

"Now, my good fellow, how are you?" he asked.

"She's done for me, I fear," was the faint reply.

"Not a whit!—courage! This day fortnight you'll hardly be a pin the worse for it: you've lost a little blood; that's all. Carter, assure him there's no danger."

"I can do that conscientiously," said Carter, who had now undone the bandages; "only I wish I could have got here sooner: he would not have bled so much—but how is this? The flesh on the shoulder is torn as well as cut. This wound was not done with a knife: there have been teeth here?"

"She bit me," he murmured. "She worried me like a tigress, when Rochester got the knife from her."

"You should not have yielded: you should have grappled with her at once," said Mr. Rochester.

"But under such circumstances what could one do?" returned Mason. "Oh, it was frightful!" he added, shuddering. "And I did not expect it: she looked so quiet at first."

"I warned you," was his friend's answer; "I said—be on your guard when you go near her. Besides, you might have waited till to-morrow, and had me with you: it was mere folly to attempt the interview tonight, and alone."

"I thought I could have done some good."

"You thought! you thought! Yes; it makes me impatient to hear you: however, you have suffered, and are likely to suffer enough for not taking my advice; so I'll say no more. Carter—hurry!—hurry! The sun will soon rise, and I must have him off."

"Directly, sir; the shoulder is just bandaged. I must look to this other wound in the arm: she has had her teeth here too, I think."

"She sucked the blood: she said she'd drain my heart," said Mason.

I saw Mr. Rochester shudder: a singularly marked expression of disgust, horror, hatred, warped his countenance almost to distortion; but he only said:

"Come, be silent, Richard, and never mind her gibberish: don't repeat it."

"I wish I could forget it," was the answer.

"You will when you are out of the country: when you get back to Spanish Town, you may think of her as dead and buried—or rather, you need not think of her at all."

"Impossible to forget this night!"

"It is not impossible: have some energy, man. You thought you were as dead as a herring two hours since, and you are all alive and talking now. There! Carter has done with you or nearly so; I'll make you decent in a trice. Jane" (he turned to me for the first time since his re-entrance) "take this key: go down into my bedroom, and walk straight forward into my dressing room; open the top drawer of the wardrobe and take out a clean shirt and neck-handkerchief: bring them here; and be nimble."

I went; sought the repository he had mentioned, found the articles named, and returned with them.

"Now," said he, "go to the other side of the bed while I order his toilet but don't leave the room: you may be wanted again."

I retired as directed.

"Was anybody stirring below when you went down, Jane?" inquired Mr. Rochester, presently.

"No, sir; all was very still."

"We shall get you off cannily, Dick; and it will be better, both for your sake, and for that of the poor creature in yonder. I have striven

long to avoid exposure, and I should not like it to come at last. Here, Carter, help him on with his waistcoat. Where did you leave your furred cloak? You can't travel a mile without that, I know, in this damned cold climate. In your room? Jane, run down to Mr. Mason's room—the one next mine—and fetch a cloak you will see there."

Again I ran, and again returned, bearing an immense mantle lined and edged with fur.

"Now, I've another errand for you," said my untiring master; "you must away to my room again. What a mercy you are shod with velvet, Jane!—a clod-hopping messenger would never do at this juncture. You must open the middle drawer of my toilet-table and take out a little phial and a little glass you will find there—quick!"

I flew thither and back, bringing the desired vessels.

"That's well! Now, doctor, I shall take the liberty of administering a dose myself; on my own responsibility. I got this cordial at Rome, of an Italian charlatan—a fellow you would have kicked, Carter. It is not a thing to be used indiscriminately, but it is good upon occasion: as now, for instance. Jane, a little water."

He held out the tiny glass, and I half filled it from the water bottle on the washstand.

"That will do: now wet the lip of the phial."

I did so: he measured twelve drops of a crimson liquid, and presented it to Mason.

"Drink, Richard: it will give you the heart you lack, for an hour or so."

"But will it hurt me? Is it inflammatory?"

"Drink! drink! drink!"

Mr. Mason obeyed, because it was evidently useless to resist. He was dressed now: he still looked pale, but he was no longer gory and sullied. Mr. Rochester let him sit three minutes after he had swallowed the liquid; he then took his arm.

"Now I am sure you can get on your feet," he said: "try."

The patient rose.

"Carter, take him under the other shoulder. Be of good cheer, Richard; step out: that's it!"

"I do feel better," remarked Mr. Mason.

"I am sure you do. Now, Jane, trip on before us away to the backstairs; unbolt the side-passage door, and tell the driver of the postchaise you will see in the yard—or just outside, for I told him not to drive his rattling wheels over the pavement—to be ready; we are coming: and, Jane, if any one is about, come to the foot of the stairs and hem."

It was by this time half-past five, and the sun was on the point of rising; but I found the kitchen still dark and silent. The side-passage door was fastened; I opened it with as little noise as possible: all the yard was quiet; but the gates stood wide open, and there was a post-chaise, with horses ready harnessed, and driver seated on the box, stationed outside. I approached him, and said the gentlemen were coming; he nodded: and then I looked carefully round and listened. The stillness of early morning slumbered everywhere; the curtains were yet drawn over the servants' chamber windows; little birds were just twittering in the blossom-blanched orchard trees, whose boughs drooped like white garlands over the wall enclosing one side of the yard; the carriage horses stamped from time to time in their closed stables. All else was still.

The gentlemen now appeared. Mason, supported by Mr. Rochester and the surgeon, seemed to walk with tolerable ease: they assisted him into the chaise; Carter followed.

"Take care of him," said Mr. Rochester to the latter, "and keep him at your house till he is quite well: I shall ride over in a day or two to see how he gets on. Richard, how is it with you?"

"The fresh air revives me, Fairfax."

"Leave the window open on his side, Carter; there is no wind—good-bye, Dick."

"Fairfax—"

"Well, what is it?"

"Let her be taken care of; let her be treated as tenderly as may be: let her—" he stopped and burst into tears.

"I do my best; and have done it, and will do it," was the answer: he shut up the chaise door, and the vehicle drove away.

"Yet would to God there was an end of all this!" added Mr. Rochester, as he closed and barred the heavy yard-gates. This done, he moved with slow step and abstracted air toward a door in the wall bordering the orchard. I, supposing he had done with me, prepared to return to the house; again, however, I heard him call "Jane!" He had opened the portal and stood at it, waiting for me.

"Come where there is some freshness, for a few moments," he said; "that house is a mere dungeon: don't you feel it so?"

"It seems to me a splendid mansion, sir."

"The glamor of inexperience is over your eyes," he answered; "and

you see it through a charmed medium: you cannot discern that the gilding is slime and the silk draperies cobwebs; that the marble is sordid slate, and the polished woods mere refuse chips and scaly bark. Now here (he pointed to the leafy enclosure we had entered) all is real, sweet, and pure."

He strayed down a walk edged with box; with apple trees, pear trees, and cherry trees on one side, and a border on the other, full of all sorts of old-fashioned flowers, stocks, sweet Williams, primroses, pansies, mingled with southernwood, sweet brier, and various fragrant herbs. They were fresh now as a succession of April showers and gleams, followed by a lovely spring morning, could make them: the sun was just entering the dappled east, and his light illumined the wreathed and dewy orchard trees and shone down the quiet walks under them.

"Jane, will you have a flower?"

He gathered a half-blown rose, the first on the bush, and offered it to me.

"Thank you, sir."

"Do you like this sunrise, Jane? That sky with its high and light clouds which are sure to melt away as the day waxes warm—this placid and balmy atmosphere?"

"I do, very much."

"You have passed a strange night, Jane?"

"Yes, sir."

"And it has made you look pale—were you afraid when I left you alone with Mason?"

"I was afraid of someone coming out of the inner room."

"But I had fastened the door—I had the key in my pocket: I should have been a careless shepherd if I had left a lamb—my pet lamb—so near a wolf's den, unguarded. You were safe."

"Will Grace Poole live here still, sir?"

"Oh, yes! don't trouble your head about her—put the thing out of your thoughts."

"Yet it seems to me your life is hardly secure while she stays."

"Never fear-I will take care of myself."

"Is the danger you apprehended last night gone by now, sir?"

"I cannot vouch for that till Mason is out of England: nor even then. To live, for me, Jane, is to stand on a crater-crust which may crack and spue fire any day."

"But Mr. Mason seems a man easily led. Your influence, sir, is

evidently potent with him: he will never set you at defiance, or will-fully injure you."

"Oh, no! Mason will not defy me; nor, knowing it, will he hurt me—but, unintentionally, he might in a moment, by one careless word, deprive me, if not of life, yet for ever of happiness."

"Tell him to be cautious, sir: let him know what you fear, and show him how to avert the danger."

He laughed sardonically, hastily took my hand, and as hastily threw it from him.

"If I could do that, simpleton, where would the danger be? Annihilated in a moment. Ever since I have known Mason, I have only had to say to him, 'Do that,' and the thing has been done. But I cannot give him orders in this case: I cannot say, 'Beware of harming me, Richard'; for it is imperative that I should keep him ignorant that harm to me is possible. Now you look puzzled; and I will puzzle you further. You are my little friend, are you not?"

"I like to serve you, sir, and to obey you in all that is right."

"Precisely: I see you do. I see genuine contentment in your gait, and mien, your eye and face, when you are helping me and pleasing me—working for me, and with me, in, as you characteristically say, 'all that is right:' for if I bid you do what you thought wrong, there would be no light-footed running, no neat-handed alacrity, no lively glance and animated complexion. My friend would then turn to me, quiet and pale, and would say, 'No, sir; that is impossible: I cannot do it, because it is wrong'; and would become immutable as a fixed star. Well, you too have power over me, and may injure me: yet I dare not show you where I am vulnerable, lest, faithful and friendly as you are, you should transfix me at once."

"If you have no more to fear from Mr. Mason than you have from me, sir, you are very safe."

"God grant it may be so! Here, Jane, is an arbor; sit down."

The arbor was an arch in the wall, lined with ivy; it contained a rustic seat. Mr. Rochester took it, leaving room, however, for me: but I stood before him.

"Sit," he said; "the bench is long enough for two. You don't hesitate to take a place at my side, do you? Is that wrong, Jane?"

I answered him by assuming it: to refuse would, I felt, have been unwise.

"Now, my little friend, while the sun drinks the dew—while all the flowers in this old garden awake and expand, and the birds fetch their

young ones' breakfast out of the Thornfield, and the early bees do their first spell of work—I'll put a case to you; which you must endeavor to suppose your own: but first, look at me, and tell me you are at ease, and not fearing that I err in detaining you, or that you err in staying."

"No, sir; I am content."

"Well, then, Jane, call to aid your fancy: suppose you were no longer a girl well reared and disciplined, but a wild boy indulged from childhood upward; imagine yourself in a remote foreign land; conceive that you there commit a capital error, no matter of what nature or from what motives, but one whose consequences must follow you through life and taint all your existence. Mind, I don't say a crime; I am not speaking of shedding of blood or any other guilty act, which might make the perpetrator amenable to the law: my word is error. The results of what you have done become in time to you utterly insupportable; you take measures to obtain relief: unusual measures, but neither unlawful nor culpable. Still you are miserable; for hope has quitted you on the very confines of life: your sun at noon darkens in an eclipse, which you feel will not leave it till the time of setting. Bitter and base associations have become the sole food of your memory: you wander here and there, seeking rest in exile: happiness in pleasure—I mean in heartless, sensual pleasure—such as dulls intellect and blights feeling. Heart-weary and soul-withered, you come home after years of voluntary banishment; you make a new acquaintance-how or where no matter: you find in this stranger much of the good and bright qualities which you have sought for twenty years, and never before encountered; and they are all fresh, healthy, without soil and without taint. Such society revives, regenerates: you feel better days come back-higher wishes, purer feelings; you desire to recommence your life, and to spend what remains to you of days in a way more worthy of an immortal being. To attain this end, are you justified in over-leaping an obstacle of custom—a mere conventional impediment, which neither your conscience sanctifies nor your judgment approves?"

He paused for an answer: and what was I to say? Oh, for some good spirit to suggest a judicious and satisfactory response! Vain aspiration! The west wind whispered in the ivy round me; but no gentle Ariel borrowed its breath as a medium of speech: the birds sang in the tree-tops; but their song, however sweet, was inarticulate-

Again Mr. Rochester propounded his query:

"Is the wandering and sinful, but now rest-seeking and repentant, man justified in daring the world's opinion, in order to attach to him for ever this gentle, gracious, genial stranger; thereby securing his own peace of mind and regeneration of life?"

"Sir," I answered, "a wanderer's repose or a sinner's reformation should never depend on a fellow-creature. Men and women die; philosophers falter in wisdom, and Christians in goodness: if any one you know has suffered and erred, let him look higher than his equals for strength to amend, and solace to heal."

"But the instrument—the instrument! God, who does the work, ordains the instrument. I have myself—I tell it you without parable—been a worldly, dissipated, restless man; and I believe I have found the instrument for my cure, in—"

He paused: the birds went on caroling, the leaves lightly rustling. I almost wondered they did not check their songs and whispers to catch the suspended revelation: but they would have had to wait many minutes—so long was the silence protracted. At last I looked up at the tardy speaker: he was looking eagerly at me.

"Little friend," said he, in quite a changed tone—while his face changed too; losing all its softness and gravity, and becoming harsh and sarcastic—"you have noticed my tender penchant for Miss Ingram: don't you think if I married her she would regenerate me with a vengeance?"

He got up instantly, went quite to the other end of the walk, and when he came back he was humming a tune.

"Jane, Jane," said he, stopping before me, "you are quite pale with your vigils: don't you curse me for disturbing your rest?"

"Curse you? No, sir."

"Shake hands in confirmation of the word. What cold fingers! They were warmer last night when I touched them at the door of the mysterious chamber. Jane, when will you watch with me again?"

"Whenever I can be useful, sir."

"For instance, the night before I am married! I am sure I shall not be able to sleep. Will you promise to sit up with me to bear me company? To you I can talk of my lovely one: for now you have seen her and know her."

"Yes, sir."

"She's a rare one, is she not, Jane?"

"Yes, sir."

"A strapper—a real strapper, Jane: big, brown, and buxom; with

hair just such as the ladies of Carthage must have had. Bless me! there's Dent and Lynn in the stables! Go in by the shrubbery, through that wicket."

As I went one way, he went another, and I heard him in the yard, saying cheeringly:

"Mason got the start of you all this morning; he was gone before sunrise: I rose at four to see him off."

CHAPTER 21

ON THE AFTERNOON of the day following I was summoned downstairs by a message that some one wanted me in Mrs. Fairfax's room. On repairing thither, I found a man waiting for me, having the appearance of a gentleman's servant: he was dressed in deep mourning, and the hat he held in his hand was surrounded with a crape band.

"I daresay you hardly remember me, Miss," he said, rising as I entered; "but my name is Leaven; I lived coachman with Mrs. Reed when you were at Gateshead eight or nine years since, and I live there still."

"Oh, Robert! how do you do? I remember you very well: you used to give me a ride sometimes on Miss Georgiana's bay pony. And how is Bessie? You are married to Bessie?"

"Yes, Miss: my wife is very hearty, thank you; she brought me another little one about two months since—we have three now—and both mother and child are thriving."

"And are the family well at the house, Robert?"

"I am sorry I can't give you better news of them, Miss: they are very badly at present—in great trouble."

"I hope no one is dead," I said, glancing at his black dress. He too looked down at the crape round his hat and replied,

"Mr. John died yesterday was a week, at his chambers in London."

"Mr. John?"

"Yes."

"And how does his mother bear it?"

"Why you see, Miss Eyre, it is not a common mishap. His life has been very wild; these last three years he gave himself up to strange ways; and his death was shocking." "I heard from Bessie he was not doing well."

"Doing well! He could not do worse: he ruined his health and his estate among the worst men and the worst women. He got into debt and into jail: his mother helped him out twice, but as soon as he was free he returned to his old companions and habits. His head was not strong: the knaves he lived among fooled him beyond anything I ever heard. He came down to Gateshead about three weeks ago and wanted Missis to give up all to him. Missis refused: her means have long been much reduced by his extravagance; so he went back again, and the next news was that he was dead. How he died, God knows!—they say he killed himself."

I was silent: the tidings were frightful. Robert Leaven resumed: "Missis has been out of health herself for some time: she had got very stout, but was not strong with it; and the loss of money and fear of poverty were quite breaking her down. The information about Mr. John's death and the manner of it came too suddenly: it brought on a stroke. She was three days without speaking; but last Tuesday she seemed rather better: she appeared as if she wanted to say something, and kept making signs to my wife and mumbling. It was only yesterday morning, however, that Bessie understood she was pronouncing your name; and at last she made out the words, 'Bring Jane -fetch Jane Eyre: I want to speak to her.' Bessie is not sure whether she is in her right mind, or means anything by the words; but she told Miss Reed and Miss Georgiana, and advised them to send for you. The young ladies put it off at first: but their mother grew so restless, and said, 'Jane, Jane,' so many times, that at last they consented. I left Gateshead yesterday; and if you can get ready, Miss, I should like to take you back with me early tomorrow morning."

"Yes, Robert, I shall be ready: it seems to me that I ought to go."
"I think so too, Miss. Bessie said she was sure you would not refuse: but I suppose you will have to ask leave before you can get off?"

"Yes; and I will do it now"; and having directed him to the servants' hall, and recommended him to the care of John's wife, and the attentions of John himself, I went in search of Mr. Rochester.

He was not in any of the lower rooms; he was not in the yard, the stables, or the grounds. I asked Mrs. Fairfax if she had seen him; yes, she believed he was playing billiards with Miss Ingram. To the billiard room I hastened: the click of balls and the hum of voices re-

sounded thence; Mr. Rochester, Miss Ingram, the two Misses Eshton, and their admirers, were all busied in the game. It required some courage to disturb so interesting a party; my errand, however, was one I could not defer, so I approached the master where he stood at Miss Ingram's side. She turned as I drew near, and looked at me haughtily: her eyes seemed to demand, "What can the creeping creature want now?" and when I said, in a low voice, "Mr. Rochester," she made a movement as if tempted to order me away. I remember her appearance at the moment—it was very graceful and very striking: she wore a morning robe of sky-blue crepe; a gauzy azure scarf was twisted in her hair. She had been all animation with the game, and irritated pride did not lower the expression of her haughty lineaments.

"Does that person want you?" she inquired of Mr. Rochester; and Mr. Rochester turned to see who the "person" was. He made a curious grimace—one of his strange and equivocal demonstrations—threw down his cue and followed me from the room.

"Well, Jane?" he said, as he rested his back against the schoolroom door, which he had shut.

"If you please, sir, I want leave of absence for a week or two."

"What to do? Where to go?"

"To see a sick lady who has sent for me."

"What sick lady? Where does she live?"

"At Gateshead, in ----shire."

"——shire? That is a hundred miles off! Who may she be that sends for people to see her that distance?"

"Her name is Reed, sir-Mrs. Reed."

"Reed of Gateshead? There was a Reed of Gateshead, a magistrate."

"It is his widow, sir."

"And what have you to do with her? How do you know her?"

"Mr. Reed was my uncle, my mother's brother."

"The deuce he was! You never told me that before: you always said you had no relations."

"None that would own me, sir. Mr. Reed is dead, and his wife cast me off."

"Why?"

"Because I was poor, and burdensome, and she disliked me."

"But Reed left children?-you must have cousins? Sir George

Lynn was talking of a Reed of Gateshead yesterday, who, he said, was one of the veriest rascals in town; and Ingram was mentioning a Georgiana Reed of the same place, who was much admired for her beauty, a season or two ago, in London."

"John Reed is dead, too, sir: he ruined himself and half-ruined his family, and is supposed to have committed suicide. The news so shocked his mother that it brought on an apoplectic attack."

"And what good can you do her? Nonsense, Jane! I would never think of running a hundred miles to see an old lady who will, perhaps, be dead before you reach her: besides, you say she cast you off."

"Yes, sir, but that is long ago; and when her circumstances were very different: I could not be easy to neglect her wishes now."

"How long will you stay?"

"As short a time as possible, sir."

"Promise me only to stay a week."

"I had better not pass my word: I might be obliged to break it."

"At all events you will come back: you will not be induced under any pretext to take up a permanent residence with her?"

"Oh no! I shall certainly return if all be well."

"And who goes with you? You don't travel a hundred miles alone."

"No, sir, she has sent her coachman."

"A person to be trusted?"

"Yes, sir, he has lived ten years in the family."

Mr. Rochester meditated. "When do you wish to go?"

"Early tomorrow morning, sir."

"Well, you must have some money; you can't travel without money, and I daresay you have not much: I have given you no salary yet. How much have you in the world, Jane?" he asked, smiling.

I drew out my purse; a meager thing it was. "Five shillings, sir." He took the purse, poured the hoard into his palm and chuckled over it as if its scantiness pleased him. Soon he produced his pocket-book: "Here," said he, offering me a note: it was fifty pounds, and he owed me but fifteen. I told him I had no change.

"I don't want change: you know that. Take your wages."

I declined accepting more than was my due. He scowled at first; then, as if recollecting something, he said:

"Right, right! Better not give you all now: you would, perhaps, stay away three months if you had fifty pounds. There are ten: is it not plenty?"

"Yes, sir, but now you owe five."

"Come back for it then: I am your banker for forty pounds."

"Mr. Rochester, I may as well mention another matter of business to you while I have the opportunity."

"Matter of business? I'm curious to hear it."

"You have as good as informed me, sir, that you are going shortly to be married?"

"Yes: what then?"

"In that case, sir, Adèle ought to go to school. I am sure you will perceive the necessity of it."

"To get her out of my bride's way, who might otherwise walk over her rather too emphatically. There's sense in the suggestion; not a doubt of it. Adèle, as you say, must go to school; and you, of course, much march straight to—the devil?"

"I hope not, sir: but I must seek another situation somewhere."

"Of course!" he exclaimed, with a twang of voice and a distortion of features equally fantastic and ludicrous. He looked at me some minutes.

"And old Madam Reed, or the Misses, her daughters, will be solicited by you to seek a place, I suppose?"

"No, sir; I am not on such terms with my relatives as would justify me in asking favors of them—but I shall advertise."

"You shall walk up the pyramids of Egypt!" he growled. "At your peril you advertise! I wish I had only offered you a sovereign instead of ten pounds. Give me back nine pounds, Jane; I've a use for it."

"And so have I, sir," I returned, putting my hands and my purse behind me. "I could not spare the money on any account."

"Little niggard!" said he, "refusing me a pecuniary request! Give me five pounds, Jane."

"Not five shillings, sir; nor five pence."

"Just let me look at the cash."

"No, sir; you are not to be trusted."

"Jane!"

"Sir?"

"Promise me one thing."

"I'll promise you anything, sir, that I think I am likely to perform."

"Not to advertise: and to trust this quest of a situation to me. I'll find you one in time."

"I shall be glad so to do, sir, if you, in your turn, will promise that I and Adèle shall be both safe out of the house before your bride enters it."

"Very well! very well! I'll pledge my word on it. You go tomorrow, then?"

"Yes, sir; early."

"Shall you come down to the drawing room after dinner?"

"No, sir, I must prepare for the journey."

"Then you and I must bid good-bye for a little while?"

"I suppose so, sir."

"And how do people perform that ceremony of parting, Jane? Teach me; I'm not quite up to it."

"They say, Farewell; or any other form they prefer."

"Then say it."

"Farewell, Mr. Rochester, for the present."

"What must I say?"

"The same, if you like, sir."

"Farewell, Miss Eyre, for the present. Is that all?"

"Yes."

"It seems stingy, to my notions, and dry, and unfriendly. I should like something else: a little addition to the rite. If one shook hands, for instance; but no, that would not content me either. So you'll do no more than say Farewell, Jane?"

"It is enough, sir: as much good-will may be conveyed in one hearty word as in many."

"Very likely; but it is blank and cool-'farewell.'"

"How long is he going to stand with his back against that door?" I asked myself; "I want to commence my packing." The dinner-bell rang, and suddenly away he bolted, without another syllable: I saw him no more during the day, and was off before he had risen in the morning.

I reached the lodge at Gateshead about five o'clock in the afternoon of the first of May: I stepped in there before going up to the hall. It was very clean and neat: the ornamental windows were hung with little white curtains; the floor was spotless; the grate and fireirons were burnished bright, and the fire burned clear. Bessie sat on the hearth, nursing her last-born, and Robert and his sister played quietly in a corner.

"Bless you! I knew you would come!" exclaimed Mrs. Leaven, as I entered.

"Yes, Bessie," said I, after I had kissed her; "and I trust I am not too late. How is Mrs. Reed? Alive still, I hope."

"Yes, she is alive; and more sensible and collected than she was.

The doctor says she may linger a week or two yet; but he hardly thinks she will finally recover."

"Has she mentioned me lately?"

"She was talking of you only this morning, and wishing you would come: but she is sleeping now; or was ten minutes ago, when I was up at the house. She generally lies in a kind of lethargy all the afternoon, and wakes up about six or seven. Will you rest yourself here an hour, Miss, and then I will go up with you?"

Robert here entered, and Bessie laid her sleeping child in the cradle and went to welcome him. Afterward she insisted on my taking off my bonnet and having some tea, for she said I looked pale and tired. I was glad to accept her hospitality; and I submitted to be relieved of my traveling garb just as passively as I used to let her undress me when a child.

[After tea, which Bessie served exactly as she had in the old days, Jane went to the breakfast room of the hall, where she found Eliza and Georgiana Reed.]

Two young ladies appeared before me; one very tall, almost as tall as Miss Ingram, very thin too, with a sallow face and severe mien. There was something ascetic in her look, which was augmented by the extreme plainness of a straight-skirted, black, stuff dress, a starched linen collar, hair combed away from the temples, and the nun-like ornament of a string of ebony beads and a crucifix. This I felt sure was Eliza, though I could trace little resemblance to her former self in that elongated and colorless visage.

The other was as certainly Georgiana; but not the Georgiana I remembered—the slim and fairy-like girl of eleven. This was a full-blown, very plump damsel, fair as waxwork; with handsome and regular features, languishing blue eyes, and ringleted yellow hair. The hue of her dress was black too; but its fashion was so different from her sister's—so much more flowing and becoming—it looked as stylish as the other's looked puritanical.

In each of the sisters there was one trait of the mother—and only one: the thin and pallid elder daughter had her parent's Cairngorm eye: the blooming and luxuriant younger girl had her contour of jaw and chin, perhaps a little softened, but still imparting an indescribable hardness to the countenance, otherwise so voluptuous and buxom.

Both ladies, as I advanced, rose to welcome me, and both ad-

dressed me by the name of "Miss Eyre." Eliza's greeting was delivered in a short, abrupt voice, without a smile; and then she sat down again, fixed her eyes on the fire, and seemed to forget me. Georgiana added to her "How d'ye do?" several commonplaces about my journey, the weather and so on, uttered in rather a drawling tone: and accompanied by sundry side-glances that measured me from head to foot—now traversing the folds of my drab merino pelisse, and now lingering on the plain trimming of my cottage bonnet. Young ladies have a remarkable way of letting you know that they think you a "quiz," without actually saying the words. A certain superciliousness of look, coolness of manner, nonchalance of tone, express fully their sentiments on the point, without committing them by any positive rudeness in word or deed.

A sneer, however, whether covert or open, had now no longer that power over me it once possessed. As I sat between my cousins, I was surprised to find how easy I felt under the total neglect of the one and the semi-sarcastic attentions of the other. Eliza did not mortify, nor Georgiana ruffle me. The fact was, I had other things to think about; within the last few months feelings had been stirred in me so much more potent than any they could raise—pains and pleasures so much more acute and exquisite had been excited, than any it was in their power to inflict or bestow—that their airs gave me no concern either for good or bad.

"How is Mrs. Reed?" I asked soon, looking calmly at Georgiana, who thought fit to bridle at the direct address, as if it were an unexpected liberty.

"Mrs. Reed? Ah, mama you mean; she is extremely poorly: I doubt if you can see her tonight."

"If," said I, "you would just step upstairs and tell her I am come, I should be much obliged to you."

Georgiana almost started, and she opened her blue eyes wild and wide. "I know she had a particular wish to see me," I added, "and I would not defer attending to her desire longer than is absolutely necessary."

"Mama dislikes being disturbed in an evening," remarked Eliza. I soon rose, quietly took off my bonnet and gloves, uninvited, and said I would just step out to Bessie—who was, I dared say, in the kitchen—and ask her to ascertain whether Mrs. Reed was disposed to receive me or not tonight. I went, and having found Bessie and dispatched her on my errand, I proceeded to take further measures. It

it no sin to forget and break that vow now. My fingers had fastened on her hand which lay outside the sheet: had she pressed mine kindly, I should at that moment have experienced true pleasure. But unimpressionable natures are not so soon softened, nor are natural antipathies so readily eradicated: Mrs. Reed took her hand away, and turning her face rather from me, she remarked that the night was warm. Again she regarded me, so icily, I felt at once that her opinion of me—her feeling toward me—was unchanged, and unchangeable. I knew by her stony eye—opaque to tenderness, indissoluble to tears—that she was resolved to consider me bad to the last; because to believe me good, would give her no generous pleasure: only a sense of mortification.

I felt pain, and then I felt ire; and then I felt a determination to subdue her—to be her mistress in spite both of her nature and her will. My tears had risen, just as in childhood: I ordered them back to their source. I brought a chair to the bed-head: I sat down and leaned over the pillow.

"You sent for me," I said, "and I am here; and it is my intention to stay till I see how you get on."

"Oh, of course! You have seen my daughters?"

"Yes."

"Well, you may tell them I wish you to stay till I can talk some things over with you I have on my mind; tonight it is too late, and I have a difficulty in recalling them. But there was something I wished to say—let me see—"

The wandering look and changed utterance told what wreck had taken place in her once-vigorous frame. Turning restlessly, she drew the bed-clothes round her; my elbow, resting on a corner of the quilt, fixed it down: she was at once irritated.

"Sit up!" said she; "don't annoy me with holding the clothes fast —are you Jane Eyre?"

"I am Jane Eyre."

"I have had more trouble with that child than anyone would believe. Such a burden to be left on my hands—and so much annoyance as she caused me, daily and hourly, with her incomprehensible disposition, and her sudden starts of temper, and her continual, unnatural watchings of one's movements! I declare she talked to me once like something mad, or like a fiend—no child ever spoke or looked as she did; I was glad to get her away from the house. What did they

do with her at Lowood? The fever broke out there, and many of the pupils died. She, however, did not die: but I said she did—I wish she had died!"

"A strange wish, Mrs. Reed: why do you hate her so?"

"I had a dislike to her mother always; for she was my husband's only sister, and a great favorite with him: he opposed the family's disowning her when she made her low marriage; and when news came of her death, he wept like a simpleton. He would send for the baby; though I entreated him rather to put it out to nurse and pay for its maintenance. I hated it the first time I set my eyes on it—a sickly, whining, pining thing! It would wail in its cradle all night long-not screaming heartily like any other child, but whimpering and moaning. Reed pitied it; and he used to nurse it and notice it as if it had been his own: more, indeed, than he ever noticed his own at that age. He would try to make my children friendly to the little beggar: the darlings could not bear it, and he was angry with them when they showed their dislike. In his last illness, he had it brought continually to his bedside; and but an hour before he died, he bound me by vow to keep the creature. I would as soon have been charged with a pauper brat out of a workhouse: but he was weak, naturally weak. John does not at all resemble his father, and I'm glad of it: John is like me and like my brothers—he is quite a Gibson. Oh, I wish he would cease tormenting me with letters for money! I have no more money to give him: we are getting poor. I must send away half the servants and shut up part of the house; or let it off. I can never submit to do that-yet how are we to get on? Two-thirds of my income goes in paying the interest of mortgages. John gambles dreadfully, and always loses—poor boy! He is beset by sharpers: John is sunk and degraded —his look is frightful—I feel ashamed for him when I see him."

She was getting much excited. "I think I had better leave her now," said I to Bessie, who stood on the other side of the bed.

"Perhaps you had, Miss: but she often talks in this way toward night—in the morning she is calmer."

I rose. "Stop!" exclaimed Mrs. Reed. "There is another thing I wished to say. He threatens me—he continually threatens me with his own death, or mine: and I dream sometimes that I see him laid out with a great wound in his throat, or with a swollen and blackened face. I am come to a strange pass: I have heavy troubles. What is to be done? How is the money to be had?"

Bessie now endeavored to persuade her to take a sedative draught: she succeeded with difficulty. Soon after, Mrs. Reed grew more composed, and sank into a dozing state. I then left her.

More than ten days elapsed before I had again any conversation with her. She continued either delirious or lethargic; and the doctor forbade everything which could painfully excite her. Meantime, I got on as well as I could with Georgiana and Eliza. They were very cold, indeed, at first. Eliza would sit half the day sewing, reading, or writing, and scarcely utter a word either to me or her sister. Georgiana would chatter nonsense to her canary bird by the hour, and take no notice of me. But I was determined not to seem at a loss for occupation or amusement: I had brought my drawing materials with me, and they served me for both.

[In amusing herself with her drawing, Jane almost involuntarily rendered a likeness of Mr. Rochester. Her competence surprised the sisters out of their silence. Georgiana chattered away by the hour about balls and lovers and clothes—about everything, in fact, except her brother's death and her mother's grave illness. Eliza spent her time as selfishly; she found occasion in the midst of her rigid schedule of tasks to inform Georgiana that, once their mother was dead, their relationship ceased, and Georgiana would have no more claim on her sister than a total stranger.

The servants paid scarcely more attention to their dying mistress than her daughters; Jane alone was vigilant. She was about to leave the room one afternoon, having made Mrs. Reed comfortable, when a feeble voice from the bed inquired who was there.]

I knew Mrs. Reed had not spoken for days: was she reviving? I went up to her.

"It is I, Aunt Reed."

"Who—I?" was her answer. "Who are you?" looking at me with surprise and a sort of alarm, but still not wildly. "You are quite a stranger to me—where is Bessie?"

"She is at the lodge, Aunt."

"Aunt," she repeated "Who calls me Aunt? You are not one of the Gibsons; and yet I know you—that face, and the eyes and forehead are quite familiar to me: you are like—why, you are like Jane Eyre!"

I said nothing: I was afraid of occasioning some shock by declaring my identity.

"Yet," said she, "I am afraid it is a mistake: my thoughts deceive me. I wished to see Jane Eyre, and I fancy a likeness where none exists: besides, in eight years she must be so changed." I now gently assured her that I was the person she supposed and desired me to be: and seeing that I was understood, and that her senses were quite collected, I explained how Bessie had sent her husband to fetch me from Thornfield.

"I am very ill, I know," she said ere long. "I was trying to turn myself a few minutes since, and find I cannot move a limb. It is as well I should ease my mind before I die: what we think little of in health, burdens us at such an hour as the present is to me. Is the nurse here? or is there no one in the room but you?"

I assured her we were alone.

"Well, I have twice done you a wrong which I regret now. One was in breaking the promise which I gave my husband to bring you up as my own child; the other—" she stopped. "After all, it is of no great importance, perhaps," she murmured to herself: "and then I may get better; and to humble myself so to her is painful."

She made an effort to alter her position, but failed: her face changed; she seemed to experience some inward sensation—the precursor, perhaps, of the last pang.

"Well: I must get it over. Eternity is before me: I had better tell her.—Go to my dressing-case, open it, and take out a letter you will see there."

I obeyed her directions. "Read the letter," she said. It was short, and thus conceived:

"MADAM,

"Will you have the goodness to send me the address of my niece, Jane Eyre, and to tell me how she is; it is my intention to write shortly and desire her to come to me at Madeira. Providence has blessed my endeavors to secure a competency; and as I am unmarried and childless, I wish to adopt her during my life, and bequeath her at my death whatever I may have to leave.

"I am, Madam, etc., etc.
"John Eyre, Madeira."

It was dated three years back.

"Why did I never hear of this?" I asked.

"Because I disliked you too fixedly and thoroughly ever to lend a hand in lifting you to prosperity. I could not forget your conduct

to me, Jane—the fury with which you once turned on me; the tone in which you declared you abhorred me the worst of anybody in the world; the unchildlike look and voice with which you affirmed that the very thought of me made you sick, and asserted that I had treated you with miserable cruelty. I could not forget my own sensations when you thus started up and poured out the venom of your mind: I felt fear, as if an animal that I had struck or pushed had looked up at me with human eyes and cursed me in a man's voice.—Bring me some water! Oh! make haste!"

"Dear Mrs. Reed," said I, as I offered her the draught she required, "think no more of all this, let it pass away from your mind. Forgive me for my passionate language. I was a child then; eight, nine years have passed since that day."

She heeded nothing of what I said; but when she had tasted the water and drawn breath, she went on thus:

"I tell you I could not forget it; and I took my revenge: for you to be adopted by your uncle, and placed in a state of ease and comfort, was what I could not endure. I wrote to him; I said I was sorry for his disappointment, but Jane Eyre was dead: she had died of typhus fever at Lowood. Now act as you please: write and contradict my assertion—expose my falsehood as soon as you like. You were born, I think, to be my torment: my last hour is racked by the recollection of a deed, which, but for you, I should never have been tempted to commit."

"If you could but be persuaded to think no more of it, aunt, and to regard me with kindness and forgiveness—"

"You have a very bad disposition," said she, "and one to this day I feel it impossible to understand: how for nine years you could be patient and quiescent under any treatment, and in the tenth break out all fire and violence, I can never comprehend."

"My disposition is not so bad as you think: I am passionate, but not vindictive. Many a time, as a little child, I should have been glad to love you if you would have let me; and I long earnestly to be reconciled to you know: kiss me, Aunt."

I approached my cheek to her lips: she would not touch it. She said I oppressed her by leaning over the bed; and again demanded water. As I laid her down—for I raised her and supported her on my arm while she drank—I covered her ice-cold and clammy hand with mine: the feeble fingers shrank from my touch—the glazing eyes shunned my gaze.

"Love me, then, or hate me, as you will," I said at last, "you have my full and free forgiveness: ask now for God's and be at peace."

Poor, suffering woman! it was too late for her to make now the effort to change her habitual frame of mind: living, she had ever hated me—dying, she must hate me still.

The nurse now entered, and Bessie followed. I yet lingered half an hour longer, hoping to see some sign of amity: but she gave none. She was fast relapsing into stupor; nor did her mind again rally: at twelve o'clock that night she died. I was not present to close her eyes; nor were either of her daughters. . . .

CHAPTER 22

[Jane stayed at Gateshead long enough to see Georgiana off to London, where she subsequently made an advantageous marriage, and to help Eliza off to the Continent and the nunnery of which she eventually became the mother superior. Then, a month after her departure from Thornfield, Jane returned, choosing, when she had arrived at Millcote, to walk the remaining distance in order to enjoy the soft June evening. At the stile where they had first met, Jane came on Mr. Rochester. His greeting was so cordial, and the pleasure Adèle and Mrs. Fairfax showed on her re-appearance so great, Jane permitted herself the hope that her employer might somehow manage to keep the group together even after his impending marriage.]

CHAPTER 23

[On Midsummer Eve, when Adèle had been put to bed, Jane wandered into the garden to enjoy the end of a glorious day.]

Sweet-brier and southernwood, jasmine, pink, and rose, have long been yielding their evening sacrifice of incense. . . . I look round and I listen. I see trees laden with ripening fruit. I hear a nightingale warbling in a wood half a mile off; no moving form is visible, no coming step audible; but that perfume increases: I must flee. I make for the wicket leading to the shrubbery, and I see Mr. Rochester

entering. I step aside into the ivy recess, he will not stay long: he will soon return whence he came, and if I sit still he will never see me.

But no—eventide is as pleasant to him as to me, and this antique garden as attractive; and he strolls on, now lifting the gooseberry-tree branches to look at the fruit, large as plums, with which they are laden; now taking a ripe cherry from the wall; now stooping toward a knot of flowers, either to inhale their fragrance or to admire the dewbeads on their petals. A great moth goes humming by me; it alights on a plant at Mr. Rochester's foot: he sees it, and bends to examine it.

"Now, he has his back toward me," thought I, "and he is occupied too; perhaps, if I walk softly, I can slip away unnoticed."

I trod on an edging of turf that the crackle of the pebbly gravel might not betray me: he was standing among the beds at a yard or two distant from where I had to pass; the moth apparently engaged him. "I shall get by very well," I meditated. As I crossed his shadow, thrown long over the garden by the moon, not yet risen high, he said quietly without turning:

"Jane, come and look at this fellow."

I had made no noise: he had not eyes behind—could his shadow feel? I started at first, and then I approached him.

"Look at his wings," said he, "he reminds me rather of a West Indian insect; one does not often see so large and gay a night-rover in England: there! he is flown."

The moth roamed away. I was sheepishly retreating also; but Mr. Rochester followed me, and when we reached the wicket, he said:

"Turn back: on so lovely a night it is a shame to sit in the house; and surely no one can wish to go to bed while sunset is thus at meeting with moonrise."

It is one of my faults, that though my tongue is sometimes prompt enough at an answer, there are times when it sadly fails me in framing an excuse; and always the lapse occurs at some crisis, when a facile word or plausible pretext is specially wanted to get me out of painful embarrassment. I did not like to walk at this hour alone with Mr. Rochester in the shadowy orchard; but I could not find a reason to allege for leaving him. I followed with lagging step, and thoughts busily bent on discovering a means of extrication; but he himself looked so composed and so grave also, I became ashamed of feeling any confusion: the evil—if evil existent or prospective there was—seemed to lie with me only; his mind was unconscious and quiet.

"Jane," he recommenced, as we entered the laurel walk, and slowly strayed down in the direction of the sunk fence and the horse-chestnut, "Thornfield is a pleasant place in summer, is it not?"

"Yes, sir."

"You must have become in some degree attached to the house—you, who have an eye for natural beauties, and a good deal of the organ of Adhesiveness?"

"I am attached to it, indeed."

"And though I don't comprehend how it is, I perceive you have acquired a degree of regard for that foolish little child Adèle, too; and even for simple dame Fairfax?"

"Yes, sir; in different ways, I have an affection for both."

"And would be sorry to part with them?"

"Yes."

"Pity!" he said, and sighed and paused. "It is always the way of events in this life," he continued presently: "no sooner have you got settled in a pleasant resting-place, than a voice calls out to you to rise and move on, for the hour of repose is expired."

"Must I move on, sir?" I asked. "Must I leave Thornfield?"

"I believe you must, Jane. I am sorry, Janet, but I believe indeed you must."

This was a blow: but I did not let it prostrate me.

"Well, sir, I shall be ready when the order to march comes."

"It is come now-I must give it tonight."

"Then you are going to be marrried, sir?"

"Ex-act-ly-pre-cise-ly: with your usual acuteness, you have hit the nail straight on the head."

"Soon, sir?"

"Very soon, my—that is, Miss Eyre: and you'll remember, Jane, the first time I, or Rumor, plainly intimated to you that it was my intention to put my old bachelor's neck into the sacred noose, to enter into the holy estate of matrimony—to take Miss Ingram to my bosom, in short (she's an extensive armful: but that's not to the point—one can't have too much of such a very excellent thing as my beautiful Blanche): well, as I was saying—listen to me, Jane! You're not turning your head to look after more moths, are you? That was only a lady-clock, child, 'flying away home.' I wish to remind you that it was you who first said to me, with that discretion I respect in you—with that foresight, prudence and humility which befit your responsible and dependent position—that in case I married

Miss Ingram—both you and little Adèle had better trot forthwith. I pass over the sort of slur conveyed in this suggestion on the character of my beloved; indeed, when you are far away, Janet, I'll try to forget it: I shall notice only its wisdom; which is such that I have made it my law of action. Adèle must go to school; and you, Miss Eyre, must get a new situation."

"Yes, sir, I will advertise immediately: and meantime, I suppose—" I was going to say, "I suppose I may stay here, till I find another shelter to betake myself to," but I stopped, feeling it would not do to risk a long sentence, for my voice was not quite under command.

"In about a month I hope to be a bridegroom," continued Mr. Rochester; "and in the interim I shall myself look out for employment and an asylum for you."

"Thank you, sir; I am sorry to give-"

"Oh, no need to apologize! I consider that when a dependent does her duty as well as you have done yours, she has a sort of claim upon her employer for any little assistance he can conveniently render her; indeed I have already, through my future mother-in-law, heard of a place that I think will suit: it is to undertake the education of the five daughters of Mrs. Dionysius O'Gall of Bitternutt Lodge, Connaught, Ireland. You'll like Ireland, I think: they're such warmhearted people there, they say."

"It is a long way off, sir."

"No matter—a girl of your sense will not object to the voyage or the distance."

"Not the voyage, but the distance: and then the sea is a barrier—"

"From what, Jane?"

"From England and from Thornfield: and-"

"Well?"

"From you, sir."

I said this almost involuntarily; and, with as little sanction of free will, my tears gushed out. I did not cry so as to be heard, however; I avoided sobbing. The thought of Mrs. O'Gall and Bitternutt Lodge struck cold to my heart, and colder the thought of all the brine and foam, destined, as it seemed, to rush between me and the master at whose side I now walked; and coldest the remembrance of the wider ocean—wealth, caste, custom intervened between me and what I naturally and inevitably loved.

"It is a long way," I again said.

"It is, to be sure; and when you get to Bitternutt Lodge, Connaught, Ireland, I shall never see you again, Jane: that's morally certain. I never go over to Ireland, not having myself much of a fancy for the country. We have been good friends, Jane; have we not?"

"Yes, sir."

"And when friends are on the eve of separation, they like to spend the little time that remains to them close to each other. Comewe'll talk over the voyage and the parting quietly, half an hour or so, while the stars enter into their shining life up in heaven yonder: here is the chestnut tree: here is the bench at its old roots. Come. we will sit there in peace tonight, though we should never more be destined to sit there together." He seated me and himself.

"It is a long way to Ireland, Janet, and I am sorry to send my little friend on such weary travels: but if I can't do better, how is it to be helped? Are you anything akin to me, do you think, Jane?"

I could risk no sort of answer by this time: my heart was full.

"Because," he said, "I sometimes have a queer feeling with regard to you—especially when you are near me, as now: it is as if I had a string somewhere under my left ribs, tightly and inextricably knotted to a similar string situated in the corresponding quarter of your little frame. And if that boisterous channel, and two hundred miles or so of land come broad between us, I am afraid that cord of communion will be snapped; and then I've a nervous notion I should take to bleeding inwardly. As for you—you'd forget me."

"That I never should, sir: you know—" impossible to proceed. "Jane, do you hear that nightingale singing in the wood? Listen!" In listening, I sobbed convulsively; for I could repress what I endured no longer; I was obliged to yield, and I was shaken from head to foot with acute distress. When I did speak, it was only to express an impetuous wish that I had never been born, or never come to Thornfield.

"Because you are sorry to leave it?"

The vehemence of emotion, stirred by grief and love within me, was claiming mastery, and struggling for full sway; and asserting a right to predominate: to overcome, to live, rise, and reign at last; yes, and to speak.

"I grieve to leave Thornfield: I love Thornfield. I love it, because I have lived in it a full and delightful life, momentarily at least. I have not been trampled on. I have not been petrified. I have not been buried with inferior minds, and excluded from every glimpse of communion with what is bright and energetic, and high. I have talked, face to face, with what I reverence; with what I delight in, with an original, a vigorous, an expanded mind. I have known you, Mr. Rochester; and it strikes me with terror and anguish to feel I absolutely must be torn from you forever. I see the necessity of departure; and it is like looking on the necessity of death."

"Where do you see the necessity?" he asked, suddenly.

"Where? You, sir, have placed it before me."

"In what shape?"

"In the shape of Miss Ingram; a noble and beautiful woman—your bride."

"My bride! What bride? I have no bride!"

"But you will have."

"Yes. I will! I will!" He set his teeth.

"Then I must go: you have said it yourself."

"No: you must stay! I swear it—and the oath shall be kept."

"I tell you I must go!" I retorted, roused to something like passion. "Do you think I can stay to become nothing to you? Do you think I am an automaton? a machine without feelings? and can bear to have my morsel of bread snatched from my lips, and my drop of living water dashed from my cup? Do you think, because I am poor, obscure, plain, and little, I am soulless and heartless? You think wrong! I have as much soul as you, and full as much heart! And if God had gifted me with some beauty, and much wealth, I should have made it as hard for you to leave me, as it is now for me to leave you. I am not talking to you now through the medium of custom, conventionalities, or even of mortal flesh. It is my spirit that addresses your spirit; just as if both had passed through the grave, and we stood at God's feet, equal, as we are!"

"As we are!" repeated Mr. Rochester—"so," he added, enclosing me in his arms, gathering me to his breast, pressing his lips on my lips: "so, Jane!"

"Yes, so, sir," I rejoined: "and yet not so; for you are a married man—or as good as a nearried man, and wed to one inferior to you—to one with whom you have no sympathy—whom I do not believe you truly love; for I have seen and heard you sneer at her. I would scorn such a union: therefore I am better than you—let me go!"

"Where, Jane? To Ireland?"

"Yes-to Ireland. I have spoken my mind, and can go anywhere now."

"Jane, be still; don't struggle so, like a wild, frantic bird that is rending its own plumage in its desperation."

"I am no bird; and no net ensnares me; I am a free human being with an independent will, which I now exert to leave you."

Another effort set me at liberty, and I stood erect before him.

"And your will shall decide your destiny," he said: "I offer you my hand, my heart, and a share of all my possessions."

"You play a farce, which I merely laugh at."

"I ask you to pass through life at my side—to be my second self and best earthly companion."

"For that fate you have already made your choice, and must abide by it."

"Jane, be still a few moments: you are over-excited. I will be still too."

A waft of wind came sweeping down the laurel walk, and trembled through the boughs of the chestnut: it wandered away—away—to an indefinite distance—it died. The nightingale's song was then the only voice of the hour: in listening to it, I again wept. Mr. Rochester sat quiet, looking at me gently and seriously. Some time passed before he spoke: he at last said:

"Come to my side, Jane, and let us explain and understand one another."

"I will never again come to your side. I am torn away now, and cannot return."

"But, Jane, I summon you as my wife: it is you only I intend to marry."

I was silent: I thought he mocked me.

"Come, Jane-come hither."

"Your bride stands between us."

He rose, and with a stride reached me.

"My bride is here," he said, again drawing me to him, "because my equal is here, and my likeness. Jane, will you marry me?"

Still I did not answer, and still I writhed myself from his grasp: for I was still incredulous.

"Do you doubt me, Jane?"

"Entirely."

"You have no faith in me?"

"Not a whit."

"Am I a liar in your eyes?" he asked passionately. "Little skeptic, you shall be convinced. What love have I for Miss Ingram? None: and that you know. What love has she for me? None: as I have taken pains to prove: I caused a rumor to reach her that my fortune was not a third of what was supposed, and after that I presented myself to see the result; it was coldness both from her and her mother. I would not—I could not—marry Miss Ingram. You—you strange—you almost unearthly thing!—I love as my own flesh. You—poor and obscure, and small and plain as you are—I entreat to accept me as a husband."

"What, me!" I ejaculated: beginning in his earnestness—and especially in his incivility—to credit his sincerity: "me who have not a friend in the world but you—if you are my friend, not a shilling but what you have given me?"

"You, Jane. I must have you for my own—entirely my own. Will you be mine? Say yes, quickly."

"Mr. Rochester, let me look at your face: turn to the moonlight." "Why?"

"Because I want to read your countenance; turn!"

"There: you will find it scarcely more legible than a crumpled, scratched page. Read on: only make haste, for I suffer."

His face was very much agitated and very much flushed, and there were strong workings in the features, and strange gleams in the eyes.

"Oh, Jane, you torture me!" he exclaimed. "With that searching and yet faithful and generous look, you torture me!"

"How can I do that? If you are true and your offer real, my only feelings to you must be gratitude and devotion—they cannot torture."

"Gratitude!" he ejaculated; and added wildly—"Jane, accept me quickly. Say Edward—give me my name—Edward—l will marry you."

"Are you in earnest?—Do you truly love me?—Do you sincerely wish me to be your wife?"

"I do; and if an oath is necessary to satisfy you, I swear it."

"Then, sir, I will marry you."

"Edward-my little wife!"

"Dear Edward!"

"Come to me—come to me entirely now," said he: and added, in his deepest tone, speaking in my ear as his cheek was laid on mine, "Make my happiness—I will make yours."

"God pardon me!" he subjoined ere long, "and man meddle not with me: I have her, and will hold her."

"There is no one to meddle, sir. I have no kindred to interfere."
"No—that is the best of it," he said. And if I had loved him less I should have thought his accent and look of exultation savage: but sitting by him, roused from the nightmare of parting-called to the paradise of union—I thought only of the bliss given me to drink in so abundant a flow. Again and again he said, "Are you happy, Jane?" And again and again I answered, "Yes." After which he murmured, "It will atone—it will atone. Have I not found her friendless, and cold, and comfortless? Will I not guard, and cherish, and solace her? ls there not love in my heart, and constancy in my resolves? It will expiate at God's tribunal. I know my Maker sanctions what I do. For the world's judgment-I wash my hands thereof. For man's opinion—I defy it."

But what had befallen the night? The moon was not yet set, and we were all in shadow: I could scarcely see my master's face, near as I was. And what ailed the chestnut tree? it writhed and groaned; while wind roared in the laurel walk, and came sweeping over us. "We must go in," said Mr. Rochester: "the weather changes. I

could have sat with thee till morning, Jane."

"And so," thought I, "could I with you." I should have said so, perhaps, but a livid, vivid spark leapt out of a cloud at which I was looking, and there was a crack, a crash, and a close rattling peal; and I thought only of hiding my dazzled eyes against Mr. Rochester's shoulder.

The rain rushed down. He hurried me up the walk, through the grounds, and into the house; but we were quite wet before we could pass the threshold. He was taking off my shawl in the hall, and shaking the water out of my loosened hair, when Mrs. Fairfax emerged from her room. I did not observe her at first, nor did Mr. Rochester. The lamp was lit. The clock was on the stroke of twelve.

"Hasten to take off your wet things," said he: "and before you go, good-night-good-night, my darling!"

He kissed me repeatedly. When I looked up, on leaving his arms, there stood the widow, pale, grave, and amazed. I only smiled at her, and ran upstairs. "Explanation will do for another time," thought I. Still, when I reached my chamber, I felt a pang at the idea she should even temporarily misconstrue what she had seen. But joy soon effaced every other feeling; and loud as the wind blew, near

and deep as the thunder crashed, fierce and frequent as the lightning gleamed, cataract-like as the rain fell during a storm of two hours' duration, I experienced no fear, and little awe. Mr. Rochester came thrice to my door in the course of it, to ask if I was safe and tranquil, and that was comfort, that was strength for anything.

Before I left my bed in the morning, little Adèle came running in to tell me that the great horse-chestnut at the bottom of the orchard had been struck by lightning in the night, and half of it split away.

CHAPTER 24

[As Jane dressed the next morning, the face that shone back from her glass seemed no longer plain. She went down to breakfast with the sensation that she had never known so blissful a mood. When the meal was over, Jane left silent Mrs. Fairfax and sought Adèle in the schoolroom. Instead she found Mr. Rochester, who began at once to discuss his plans for presenting her with the family gems and for taking her to visit the foreign cities he knew. The prospect of travel excited Jane, but she persuaded her employer not to load her with jewels. He requested that she ask for something else, and Jane took the chance to ask why he had been at such pains to make her believe that he would marry Blanche Ingram.]

He looked down, smiling at me, and stroked my hair, as if well pleased at seeing a danger averted. "I think I may confess," he continued, "even although I should make you a little indignant, Jane—and I have seen what a fire-spirit you can be when you are indignant. You glowed in the cool moonlight last night, when you mutinied against fate, and claimed your rank as my equal. Janet, by-the-by, it was you who made me the offer."

"Of course, I did. But to the point if you please, sir—Miss Ingram?"

"Well, I feigned courtship of Miss Ingram, because I wished to render you as madly in love with me as I was with you; and I knew jealousy would be the best ally I could call in for the furtherance of that end."

"Excellent! Now you are small—not one whit bigger than the end of my little finger. It was a burning shame, and a scandalous disgrace to act in that way. Did you think nothing of Miss Ingram's feelings, sir!"

"Her feelings are concentrated in one—pride; and that needs humbling. Were you jealous, Jane?"

"Never mind, Mr. Rochester: it is in no way interesting to you to know that. Answer me truly once more. Do you think Miss Ingram will not suffer from your dishonest coquetry? Won't she feel forsaken and deserted?"

"Impossible!—when I told you how she, on the contrary, deserted me: the idea of my insolvency cooled, or rather extinguished, her flame in a moment."

"You have a curious, designing mind, Mr. Rochester. I am afraid your principles on some points are eccentric."

"My principles were never trained, Jane: they may have grown a little awry for want of attention."

"Once again, seriously; may I enjoy the great good that has been vouchsafed to me, without fearing that anyone else is suffering the bitter pain I myself felt a while ago?"

"That you may, my good little girl: there is not another being in the world has the same pure love for me as yourself—for I lay that pleasant unction to my soul, Jane, a belief in your affection."

I turned my lips to the hand that lay on my shoulder. I loved him very much—more than I could trust myself to say—more than words had power to express.

"Ask something more," he said presently; "it is my delight to be entreated, and to yield."

I was again ready with my request. "Communicate your intentions to Mrs. Fairfax, sir: she saw me with you last night in the hall, and she was shocked. Give her some explanation before I see her again. It pains me to be misjudged by so good a woman."

"Go to your room, and put on your bonnet," he replied. "I mean you to accompany me to Millcote this morning; and while you prepare for the drive, I will enlighten the old lady's understanding. Did she think, Janet, you had given the world for love, and considered it well lost?"

"I believe she thought I had forgotten my station, and yours, sir."

"Station! Your station is in my heart, and on the necks of those who would insult you, now or hereafter. Go."

I was soon dressed; and when I heard Mr. Rochester quit Mrs. Fairfax's parlor, I hurried down to it. The old lady had been reading her morning portion of Scripture—the lesson for the day; her Bible lay open before her, and her spectacles were upon it. Her occupation, suspended by Mr. Rochester's announcement, seemed now forgotten: her eyes, fixed on the blank wall opposite, expressed the surprise of a quiet mind, stirred by unwonted tidings. Seeing me, she roused herself: she made a sort of effort to smile, and framed a few words of congratulation; but the smile expired, and the sentence was abandoned unfinished. She put up her spectacles, shut the Bible, and pushed her chair back from the table.

"I feel so astonished," she began, "I hardly know what to say to you, Miss Eyre. I have surely not been dreaming, have I? Sometimes I half fall asleep when I am sitting alone, and fancy things that have never happened. It has seemed to me more than once when I have been in a doze, that my dear husband, who died fifteen years since, has come in and sat down beside me; and that I have even heard him call me by my name, Alice, as he used to do. Now, can you tell me whether it is actually true that Mr. Rochester has asked you to marry him? Don't length at me. But I shally thought he came in here fine minutes ago, and said, that in a month you would be his wife."

"He has said the same thing to me," I replied.

"He has! Do you believe him? Have you accepted him?"

"Yes." She looked at me bewildered.

"I could never have thought it. He is a proud man: all the Rochesters were proud: and his father, at least, liked money. He, too, has always been called careful. He means to marry you?"

"He tells me so."

She surveyed my whole person: in her eyes I read that they had there found no charm powerful enough to solve the enigma.

"It passes me!" she continued: "but no doubt it is true since you say so. How it will answer, I cannot tell: I really don't know. Equality of position and fortune is often advisable in such cases; and there are twenty years of difference in your ages. He might almost be your father."

"No, indeed, Mrs. Fairfax!" exclaimed I, nettled; "he is nothing like my father! No one, who saw us together, would suppose it for an instant. Mr. Rochester looks as young, and is as young as some men at five-and-twenty."

"Is it really for love he is going to marry you?" she asked.

I was so hurt by her coldness and skepticism, that the tears rose to my eyes.

"I am sorry to grieve you," pursued the widow; "but you are so young, and so little acquainted with men, I wished to put you on your guard. It is an old saying that 'all is not gold that glitters'; and in this case I do fear there will be something found to be different to what either you or I expect."

"Why, am I a monster?" I said. "Is it impossible that Mr. Rochester should have a sincere affection for me?"

"No: you are very well; and much improved of late; and Mr. Rochester, I daresay, is fond of you. I have always noticed that you were a sort of pet of his. There are times when, for your sake, I have been a little uneasy at his marked preference, and have wished to put you on your guard: but I did not like to suggest even the possibility of wrong. I knew such an idea would shock, perhaps offend you; and you were so discreet, and so thoroughly modest and sensible, I hoped you might be trusted to protect yourself. Last night I cannot tell you what I suffered when I sought all over the house, and could find you nowhere, nor the master either; and then, at twelve o'clock, saw you come in with him."

"Well, never mind that now," I interrupted impatiently: "it is enough that all was right."

"I hope all will be right in the end," she said: "but, believe me, you cannot be too careful. Try and keep Mr. Rochester at a distance: distrust yourself as well as him. Gentlemen in his station are not accustomed to marry their governesses."

I was growing truly irritated: happily, Adèle ran in.

"Let me go, let me go to Millcote too!" she cried. "Mr. Rochester won't; though there is so much room in the new carriage. Beg him to let me go, mademoiselle."

"That I will, Adèle"; and I hastened away with her, glad to quit my gloomy monitress. The carriage was ready; they were bringing it round to the front, and my master was pacing the pavement, Pilot following him backward and forward.

"Adèle may accompany us, may she not, sir?"

"I told her no. I'll have no brats!-I'll have only you."

"Do let her go, Mr. Rochester, if you please: it would be better."

"No: she will be a restraint."

He was quite peremptory, both in look and voice. The chill of Mrs. Fairfax's warnings, and the damp of her doubts were upon me:

something of unsubstantiality and uncertainty had beset my hopes. I half lost the sense of power over him. I was about mechanically to obey him, without further remonstrance: but as he helped me into the carriage he looked at my face.

"What is the matter?" he asked; "all the sunshine is gone. Do you really wish the bairn to go? Will it annoy you if she is left behind?"

"I would far rather she went, sir."

"Then off for your bonnet, and back, like a flash of lightning!" cried he to Adèle.

She obeyed him with what speed she might.

"After all, a single morning's interruption will not matter much," said he, "when I mean shortly to claim you—your thoughts, conversation, and company—for life."

Adèle, when lifted in, commenced kissing me, by way of expressing her gratitude for my intercession; she was instantly stowed away into a corner on the other side of him. She then peeped round to where I sat; so stern a neighbor was too restrictive. To him, in his present fractious mood, she dared whisper no observations, nor ask of him any information.

"Let her come to me," I entreated: "she will, perhaps, trouble you, sir: there is plenty of room on this side."

He handed her over as if she had been a lap-dog. "I'll send her to school yet," he said, but now he was smiling.

Adèle heard him, and asked if she was to go to school "sans mademoiselle?"

"Yes," he replied, "absolutely sans mademoiselle; for I am to take mademoiselle to the moon, and there I shall seek a cave in one of the white valleys among the volcano-tops, and mademoiselle shall live with me there and only me."

"She will have nothing to eat: you will starve her," observed Adèle.

"I shall gather manna for her morning and night: the plains and hill-sides in the moon are bleached with manna, Adèle."

"She will want to warm herself: what will she do for a fire?"

"Fire rises out of the lunar mountains: when she is cold, I'll carry her up to a peak and lay her down on the edge of a crater."

"Oh, qu'elle y sera mal—peu confortable! * And her clothes, they will wear out: how can she get new ones?"

Mr. Rochester professed to be puzzled. "Hem!" said he. "What * "Oh, how little comfort there will be for her!"

would you do, Adèle? Cudgel your brains for an expedient. How would a white or a pink cloud answer for a gown, do you think? And one could cut a pretty enough scarf out of a rainbow."

"She is far better as she is," concluded Adèle, after musing some time: "besides, she would get tired of living with only you in the moon. If I were mademoiselle, I would never consent to go with you." "She has consented; she has pledged her word. . . ."

The hour spent at Millcote was a somewhat harassing one to me. Mr. Rochester obliged me to go to a certain silk warehouse: there I was ordered to choose half a dozen dresses. I hated the business, I begged leave to defer it: no—it should be gone through with now. By dint of entreaties expressed in energetic whispers, I reduced the half-dozen to two: these, however, he vowed he would select himself.

half-dozen to two: these, however, he vowed he would select himself. With anxiety I watched his eye rove over the gay stores. He fixed on a rich silk of the most brilliant amethyst dye, and a superb pink satin. I told him in a new series of whispers, that he might as well buy me a gold gown and a silver bonnet at once. I should certainly never venture to wear his choice. With infinite difficulty, for he was stubborn as a stone, I persuaded him to make an exchange in favor of a sober black satin and pearl-grey silk. "It might pass for the present," he said; "but he would yet see me glittering like a parterre."

Glad was I to get him out of the silk warehouse, and then out of a jeweler's shop: the more he bought me, the more my cheek burned with a sense of annoyance and degradation. As we re-entered the carriage, and I sat back feverish and fagged, I remembered what in the hurry of events, dark and bright, I had wholly forgotten—the letter of my uncle, John Eyre, to Mrs. Reed: his intention to adopt me and make me his legatee. "It would, indeed, be a relief," I thought, "if I had ever so small an independency; I never can bear being dressed like a doll by Mr. Rochester, or sitting like a second Danae with the golden shower falling daily round me. I will write to Madeira with the golden shower falling daily round me. I will write to Madeira the moment I get home, and tell my uncle John I am going to be married, and to whom. If I had but a prospect of one day bringing Mr. Rochester an accession of fortune, I could better endure to be kept by him now." And somewhat relieved by this idea (which I failed not to execute that day), I ventured once more to meet my master's and lover's eye; which most pertinaciously sought mine, though I averted both face and gaze. He smiled; and I thought his smile was such as a sultan might, in a blissful and fond moment, bestow on a slave his gold and gems had enriched: I crushed his

hand, which was ever hunting mine, vigorously, and thrust it back to him red with the passionate pressure.

"You need not look in that way," I said: "if you do, I'll wear nothing but my old Lowood frocks to the end of the chapter. I'll be married in this lilac gingham—you may make a dressing-gown for yourself out of the pearl-grey silk, and an infinite series of waistcoats out of the black satin."

He chuckled; he rubbed his hands: "Oh, it is rich to see and hear her!" he exclaimed. "Is she original? Is she piquant? I would not exchange this one little English girl for the grand Turk's whole seraglio; gazelle-eyes, houri forms and all!"

The eastern allusion bit me again: "I'll not stand you an inch in the stead of a seraglio," I said; "so don't consider me an equivalent for one; if you have a fancy for anything in that line, away with you, sir, to the bazaars of Istanbul without delay; and lay out in extensive slave-purchases some of that spare cash you seem at a loss to spend satisfactorily here."

"And what will you do, Janet, while I am bargaining for so many tons of flesh and such an assortment of black eyes?"

"I'll be preparing myself to go out as a missionary to preach liberty to them that are enslaved—your harem inmates among the rest. I'll get admitted there, and I'll stir up mutiny; and you, three-taled bashaw as you are, sir, shall in a trice find yourself fettered among our hands: nor will I, for one, consent to cut your bonds till you have signed a charter, the most liberal that despot ever yet conferred."

"I would consent to be at your mercy, Jane."

"I would have no mercy, Mr. Rochester, if you supplicated for it with an eye like that. While you looked so, I should be certain that whatever charter you might grant under coercion, your first act, when released, would be to violate its conditions."

"Why, Jane, what would you have? I fear you will compel me to go through a private marriage ceremony, besides that performed at the altar. You will stipulate, I see, for peculiar terms—what will they be?"

"I only want an eas; mind, sir; not crushed by crowded obligations. Do you remember what you said of Céline Varens?—of the diamonds, the cashmeres you gave her? I will not be your English Céline Varens. I shall continue to act as Adèle's governess; by that I shall earn my board and lodging, and thirty pounds a year besides. I'll furnish my

own wardrobe out of that money, and you shall give me nothing but—"

"Well, but what?"

"Your regard: and if I give you mine in return, that debt will be quit."

"Well, for cool native impudence, and pure innate pride, you haven't your equal," said he. We were now approaching Thornfield. "Will it please you to dine with me today?" he asked, as we reentered the gates.

"No, thank you, sir."

"And what for 'no, thank you'? if one may inquire."

"I never have dined with you, sir: and I see no reason why I should now, till—"

"Till what? You delight in half-phrases."

"Till I can't help it."

"Do you suppose I eat like an ogre, or a ghoul, that you dread being the companion of my repast?"

"I have formed no supposition on the subject, sir; but I want to go on as usual for another month."

"You will give up your governessing slavery at once."

"Indeed! begging your pardon, sir, I shall not. I shall just go on with it as usual. I shall keep out of your way all day, as I have been accustomed to do: you may send for me in the evening, when you feel disposed to see me, and I'll come then, but at no other time."

"I want a smoke, Jane, or a pinch of snuff, to comfort me under all this pour me donner une contenance,* as Adèle would say; and unfortunately I have neither my cigar-case, nor my snuff-box. But listen—whisper—it is your time now, little tyrant, but it will be mine presently: and when once I have fairly seized you, to have and to hold, I'll just—figuratively speaking—attach you to a chain like this" (touching his watch-guard). "Yes, bonny wee thing, I'll wear you in my bosom, lest my jewel I should tyne."

He said this as he helped me to alight from the carriage: and while he afterward lifted out Adèle, I entered the house, and made good my retreat upstairs.

He duly summoned me to his presence in the evening. I had prepared an occupation for him; for I was determined not to spend the whole time in a tête-à-tête conversation. I remembered his fine

^{*} In order to keep me in countenance

voice: I knew he liked to sing—good singers generally do. I was no vocalist myself, and, in his fastidious judgment, no musician, either; but I delighted in listening when the performance was good. No sooner had twilight, that hour of romance, begun to lower her blue and starry banner over the lattice, than I rose, opened the piano, and entreated him, for the love of heaven, to give me a song. He said I was a capricious witch, and that he would rather sing another time; but I averred that no time was like the present.

Did I like his voice, he asked.

"Very much." I was not fond of pampering that susceptible vanity of his; but for once, and from motives of expediency, I would e'en soothe and stimulate it.

"Then, Jane, you must play the accompaniment."

"Very well, sir, I will try."

I did try, but was presently swept off the stool and denominated, "a little bungler." Being pushed unceremoniously to one side—which was precisely what I wished—he usurped my place, and proceeded to accompany himself: for he could play as well as sing. I hied me to the window-recess; and while I sat there and looked out on the still trees and dim lawn, he sang in mellow tones. . . .

The system thus entered on, I pursued during the whole season of probation; and with the best success. He was kept, to be sure, rather cross and crusty: but on the whole I could see he was excellently entertained; and that a lamb-like submission and turtle-dove sensisibility, while fostering his despotism more, would have pleased his judgment, satisfied his common sense, and even suited his taste, less.

In other people's presence I was, as formerly, deferential and quiet, any other line of conduct being uncalled for; it was only in the evening conferences I thus thwarted and afflicted him. He continued to send for me punctually the moment the clock struck seven; though when I appeared before him now, he had no such honeyed terms as "love" and "darling" on his lips. The best words at my service were "provoking puppet," "malicious elf," "sprite," "changeling," etc. For caresses, too, I now got grimaces; for a pressure of the hand, a pinch on the arm; for a kiss on the cheek, a severe tweak of the ear. It was all right: at present I decidedly preferred these fierce favors to anything more tender. Mrs. Fairfax, I saw, approved me: her anxiety on my account vanished; therefore I was certain I did well. Meantime, Mr. Rochester affirmed I was wearing him to skin and bone, and threatened awful vengeance for my

present conduct at some period fast coming. I laughed in my sleeve at his menaces: "I can keep you in reasonable check now," I reflected; "and I don't doubt to be able to do it hereafter: if one expedient loses its virtue, another must be devised."

Yet after all my task was not an easy one; often I would rather have pleased than teased him. My future husband was becoming to me my whole world; and more than the world: almost my hope of heaven. He stood between me and every thought of religion, as an eclipse intervenes between man and the broad sun. I could not, in those days, see God for his creature, of whom I had made an idol.

CHAPTER 25

THE MONTH OF COURTSHIP had wasted: its very last hours were being numbered. There was no putting off the day that advanced —the bridal day; and all preparations for its arrival were complete. I. at least, had nothing more to do: there were my trunks, packed, locked, corded, ranged in a row along the wall of my little chamber; tomorrow, at this time, they would be far on their road to London: and so should I (D.V.)—or rather, not I, but one Jane Rochester, a person whom as yet I knew not. The cards of address alone remained to nail on: they lay, four little squares on the drawer. Mr. Rochester had himself written the direction, "Mrs. Rochester, ----Hotel, London," on each: I could not persuade myself to affix them, or to have them affixed. Mrs. Rochester! She did not exist: she would not be born till tomorrow, some time after eight o'clock A.M.: and I would wait to be assured she had come into the world alive, before I assigned to her all that property. It was enough that in yonder closet, opposite my dressing-table, garments said to be hers had already displaced my black stuff Lowood frock and straw bonnet: for not to me appertained that suit of wedding raiment; the pearl-colored robe, the vapory veil, pendent from the usurped portmanteau. I shut the closet, to conceal the strange, wraith-like apparel it contained, which, at this evening hour—nine o'clock—gave out certainly a most ghostly shimmer through the shadow of my apartment. . . .

It was not only the hurry of preparation that made me feverish; not only the anticipation of the great change—the new life which

was to commence tomorrow; both these circumstances had their share, doubtless, in producing that restless, excited mood which hurried me forth at this late hour into the darkening grounds: but a third cause influenced my mind more than they.

I had at heart a strange and anxious thought. Something had happened which I could not comprehend; no one knew of or had seen the event but myself: it had taken place the preceding night. Mr. Rochester that night was absent from home; nor was he yet returned: business had called him to a small estate of two or three farms he possessed thirty miles off—business it was requisite he should settle in person, previously to his meditated departure from England. I waited now his return; eager to disburden my mind, and to seek of him the solution of the enigma that perplexed me. . . . I sought the orchard, straying through its paths and gathering up the apples with which the grass round the tree roots was thickly strewn. Then I employed myself in dividing the ripe from the unripe; I carried them into the house and put them away in the storeroom. Then I repaired to the library to ascertain whether the fire was lit; for, though summer, I knew on such a gloomy evening, Mr. Rochester would like to see a cheerful hearth when he came in: yes, the fire had been kindled some time, and burned well. I placed his armchair by the chimney-corner: I wheeled the table near it: I let down the curtain, and had the candles brought in ready for lighting. More restless than ever, when I had completed these arrangements I could not sit still, nor even remain in the house: a little time-piece in the room and the old clock in the hall simultaneously struck ten.

"How late it grows!" I said: "I will run down to the gates: it is moonlight at intervals: I can see a good way on the road. He may be coming now, and to meet him will save some minutes of suspense."

The wind roared high in the great trees which embowered the gates; but the road as far as I could see, to the right hand and the left, was all still and solitary. Save for the shadows of clouds crossing it at intervals, as the moon looked out, it was but a long pale line, unvaried by one moving speck.

A puerile tear dimmed my eye while I looked—a tear of disappointment and impatience: ashamed of it, I wiped it away. I lingered; the moon shut herself wholly within her chamber, and drew close her curtain of dense cloud: the night grew dark; rain came driving fast on the gale.

"I wish he would come! I wish he would come!" I exclaimed,

seized with hypochondriac foreboding. I had expected his arrival before tea; now it was dark: what could keep him? Had an accident happened? The event of last night again recurred to me. I interpreted it as a warning of disaster. I feared my hopes were too bright to be realized; and I had enjoyed so much bliss lately that I imagined my fortune had passed its meridian, and must now decline.

"Well, I cannot return to the house," I thought; "I cannot sit by the fireside, while he is abroad in inclement weather: better tire my limbs than strain my heart; I will go forward and meet him."

I set out; I walked fast, but not far: ere I had measured a quarter of a mile, I heard the tramp of hoofs; a horseman came on, full gallop; a dog ran by his side. Away with evil presentiment! It was he: here he was, mounted on Mesrour, followed by Pilot. He saw me; for the moon had opened a blue field in the sky, and rode in it watery bright. He took his hat off, and waved it round his head. I now ran to meet him.

"There!" he exclaimed, as he stretched out his hand and bent from the saddle: "You can't do without me, that is evident. Step on my boot-toe; give me both hands: mount!"

I obeyed; joy made me agile: I sprang up before him. A hearty kissing I got for a welcome; and some boastful triumph, which I swallowed as well as I could. He checked himself in his exultation to demand, "But is there anything the matter, Janet, that you come to meet me at such an hour? Is there anything wrong?"

"No; but I thought you would never come. I could not bear to wait in the house for you, especially with this rain and wind."

"Rain and wind, indeed! Yes, you are dripping like a mermaid; pull my cloak round you: but I think you are feverish, Jane: both your cheek and hand are burning hot. I ask again, is there anything the matter?"

"Nothing, now: I am neither afraid nor unhappy."

"Then you have been both?"

"Rather: but I'll tell you all about it by-and-by, sir; and I daresay you will only laugh at me for my pains."

"I'll laugh at you heartily when tomorrow is past; till then I dare not: my prize is not certain. This is you; who have been as slippery as an eel this last month, and as thorny as a brier-rose? I could not lay a finger anywhere but I was pricked; and now I seem to have gathered up a stray lamb in my arms: you wandered out of the fold to seek your shepherd, did you, Jane?"

"I wanted you, but don't boast. Here we are at Thornfield: now let me get down."

He landed me on the pavement. As John took his horse, and he followed me into the hall, he told me to make haste and put something dry on, and then return to him in the library; and he stopped me, as I made for the staircase, to extort a promise that I would not be long: nor was I long; in five minutes I rejoined him. I found him at supper.

"Take a seat and bear me company, Jane: please God, it is the last meal but one you will eat at Thornfield Hall for a long time."

I sat down near him; but told him I could not eat.

"Is it because you have the prospect of a journey before you, Jane? Is it the thoughts of going to London that takes away your appetite?"

"I cannot see my prospects clearly tonight, sir: and I hardly know what thoughts I have in my head. Everything in life seems unreal."

"Except me: I am substantial enough—touch me."

"You, sir, are the most phantom-like of all; you are a mere dream." He held out his hand, laughing: "Is that a dream?" said he, placing it close to my eyes. He had a rounded, muscular, and vigorous hand, as well as a long, strong arm.

"Yes; though I touch it, it is a dream," said I, as I put it down from before my face. "Sir, have you finished supper?"

"Yes, Jane."

I rang the bell, and ordered away the tray. When we were again alone, I stirred the fire, and then took a low seat at my master's knee.

"It is near midnight," I said.

"Yes: but remember, Jane, you promised to wake with me the night before my wedding."

"I did; and I will keep my promise, for an hour or two at least; I have no wish to go to bed."

"Are all your arrangements complete?"

"All, sir."

"And on my part, likewise," he returned, "I have settled everything; and we leave Thornfield tomorrow, within half an hour after our return from church."

"Very well, sir."

"With what an extraordinary smile you uttered that word—'very

well,' Jane! What a bright spot of color you have on each cheek! and how strangely your eyes glitter! Are you well?"

"I believe I am."

"Believe! What is the matter?—Tell me what you feel."

"I could not, sir: no words could tell you what I feel. I wish this present hour would never end: who knows with what fate the next may come charged?"

"This is hypochondria, Jane. You have been over-excited or over-fatigued."

"Do you, sir, feel calm and happy?"

"Calm?—no: but happy—to the heart's core."

I looked up at him to read the signs of bliss in his face: it was ardent and flushed.

"Give me your confidence, Jane," he said: "relieve your mind of any weight that oppresses it, by imparting it to me. What do you fear, that I shall not prove a good husband?"

"It is the idea farthest from my thoughts."

"Are you apprehensive of the new sphere you are about to enter?
—of the new life into which you are passing?"

"No."

"You puzzle me, Jane: your look and tone of sorrowful audacity perplex and pain me. I want an explanation."

"Then, sir, listen. You were from home last night?"

"I was: I know that; and you hinted a while ago at something which had happened in my absence—nothing, probably, of consequence; but, in short, it has disturbed you. Let me hear it. Mrs. Fairfax has said something, perhaps? or you have overheard the servants talk? Your sensitive self-respect has been wounded?"

"No, sir." It struck twelve—I waited till the time-piece had concluded its silver chime, and the clock its hoarse, vibrating stroke, and then I proceeded.

"All day, yesterday, I was very busy, and very happy in my ceaseless bustle; for I am not, as you seem to think, troubled by any haunting fears about the new sphere, et cetera: I think it a glorious thing to have the hope of living with you, because I love you. No, sir, don't caress me now—let me talk undisturbed. Yesterday I trusted well in Providence, and believed that events were working together for your good and mine: it was a fine day, if you recollect—the calmness of the air and sky forbade apprehensions regarding your safety or comfort on your journey. I walked a little while on the pavement after tea, thinking of you; and I beheld you in imagination so near me, I scarcely missed your actual presence. I thought of the life that lay before me—your life, sir—an existence more expansive and stirring than my own, as much more so as the depths of the sea to which the brook runs, are than the shallows of its own strait channel. I wondered why moralists call this world a dreary wilderness; for me it blossomed like a rose. Just at sunset, the air turned cold and the sky cloudy: I went in. Sophie called me upstairs to look at my wedding dress, which they had just brought; and under it in the box I found your present—the veil which, in your princely extravagance, you sent for from London, resolved, I suppose, since I would not have jewels, to cheat me into accepting something as costly. I smiled as I unfolded it, and devised how I would tease you about your aristocratic tastes, and your efforts to mask your plebeian bride in the attributes of a peeress. I thought how I would carry down to you the square of unembroidered blond I had myself prepared as a covering for my low-born head, and ask if that was not good enough for a woman who could bring her husband neither fortune, beauty, nor connections. I saw plainly how you would look; and heard your impetuous republican answers, and your haughty disavowal of any necessity on your part to augment your wealth, or elevate your standing, by marrying either a purse or a coronet."

"How well you read me, you witch!" interposed Mr. Rochester: "but what did you find in the veil besides its embroidery? Did you find poison or a dagger that you look so mournful now?"

find poison or a dagger that you look so mournful now?"

"No, no, sir; besides the delicacy and richness of the fabric, I found nothing save Fairfax Rochester's pride; and that did not scare me, because I am used to the sight of the demon. But, sir, as it grew dark, the wind rose: it blew yesterday evening, not as it blows now—wild and high—but 'with a sullen, moaning sound' far more eerie. I wished you were at home. I came into this room, and the sight of the empty chair and fireless hearth chilled me. For some time after I went to bed, I could not sleep—a sense of anxious excitement distressed me. The gale still rising, seemed to my ear to muffle a mournful under-sound; whether in the house or abroad I could not at first tell, but it recurred, doubtful yet doleful at every lull: at last I made out it must be some dog howling at a distance. I was glad when it ceased. On sleeping, I continued in dreams the idea of a dark and gusty night. . . . During all my first sleep, I was following the windings of an unknown road. . . . I thought, sir, that you were on the

road a long way before me, and I strained every nerve to overtake you . . . while you, I felt, withdrew farther and farther every moment."

"And these dreams weigh on your spirits now, Jane, when I am close to you? You say you love me, Janet: yes—I will not forget that; and you cannot deny it. *Those* words did not die inarticulate on your lips. I heard them clear and soft: a thought too solemn perhaps, but sweet as music—'I think it is a glorious thing to have the hope of living with you, Edward, because I love you.'—Do you love me, Jane? Repeat it."

"I do, sir, I do, with my whole heart."

"Well," he said, after some minutes' silence, "it is strange; but that sentence has penetrated my breast painfully. Why? I think because you said it with such an earnest, religious energy; and because your upward gaze at me now is the very sublime of faith, truth, and devotion: it is too much as if some spirit were near me. Look wicked, Jane, as you know well how to look: coin one of your wild, shy, provoking smiles; tell me you hate me—tease me, vex me: do anything but move me: I would rather be incensed than saddened."

"I will tease you and vex you to your heart's content, when I have finished my tale: but hear me to the end. . . ."

"What! is there more? But I will not believe it to be anything important. I warn you of incredulity beforehand. Go on. . . ."

"On waking, a gleam dazzled my eyes: I thought—oh, it is day-light! But I was mistaken: it was only candlelight. Sophie, I supposed, had come in. There was a light on the dressing table, and the door of the closet, where, before going to bed, I had hung my wedding dress and veil, stood open: I heard a rustling there. I asked, 'Sophie, what are you doing?' No one answered; but a form emerged from the closet: it took the light, held it aloft and surveyed the garments pendent from the portmanteau. 'Sophie! Sophie!' I again cried: and still it was silent. I had risen up in bed, I bent forward: first, surprise, then bewilderment, came over me; and then my blood crept cold through my veins. Mr. Rochester, this was not Sophie, it was not Leah, it was not Mrs. Fairfax: it was not—no, I was sure of it, and am still—it was not even that strange woman, Grace Poole."

"It must have been one of them," interrupted my master.

"No, sir, I solemnly assure you to the contrary. The shape standing before me had never crossed my eyes within the precincts of Thornfield Hall before; the height, the contour were new to me."

"Describe it, Jane."

"It seemed, sir, a woman, tall and large, with thick and dark hair hanging long down her back. I know not what dress she had on: it was white and straight; but whether gown, sheet, or shroud, I cannot tell."

"Did you see her face?"

"Not at first. But presently she took my veil from its place; she held it up; gazed at it long, and then she threw it over her own head, and turned to the mirror. At that moment I saw the reflection of the visage and features quite distinctly in the dark oblong glass."

"And how were they?"

"Fearful and ghastly to me—oh, sir, I never saw a face like it! It was a discolored face—it was a savage face. I wish I could forget the roll of the red eyes and the fearful blackened inflation of the lineaments!"

"Ghosts are usually pale, Jane."

"This, sir, was purple: the lips were swelled and dark; the brow furrowed; the black eyebrows widely raised over the bloodshot eyes. . . ."

"Ah!-what did it do?"

"Sir, it removed my veil from its gaunt head, rent it in two parts, and flinging both on the floor, trampled on them."

"Afterward?"

"It drew aside the window-curtain and looked out: perhaps it saw dawn approaching, for, taking the candle, it retreated to the door. Just at my bedside the figure stopped: the fiery eye glared upon me—she thrust up her candle close to my face, and extinguished it under my eyes. I was aware her lurid visage flamed over mine, and I lost consciousness: for the second time in my life—only the second time—I became insensible from terror."

"Who was with you when you revived?"

"No one, sir; but the broad day. I rose, bathed my head and face in water, drank a long draught; felt that though enfecbled I was not ill, and determined that to none but you would I impart this vision. Now, sir, tell me who and what that woman was?"

"The creature of an over-stimulated brain; that is certain. I must be careful of you, my treasure: nerves like yours were not made for rough handling. . . . When we are once united, there shall be no recurrence of these mental terrors: I guarantee that."

'Mental terrors, sir! I wish I could believe them to be only such:

I wish it more than ever; since even you cannot explain to me the mystery of that awful visitant."

"And since I cannot do it, Jane, it must have been unreal."

"But, sir, when I said so to myself on rising this morning, and when I looked round the room to gather courage and comfort from the cheerful aspect of each familiar object in full daylight, there—on the carpet—I saw what gave the distinct lie to my hypothesis—the veil, torn from top to bottom in two halves!"

I felt Mr. Rochester start and shudder; he hastily flung his arms round me: "Thank God!" he exclaimed, "that if anything malignant did come near you last night, it was only the veil that was harmed. Oh, to think what might have happened!"

He drew his breath short, and strained me so close to him, I could scarcely pant. After some minutes' silence, he continued, cheerily:

"Now, Janet, I'll explain to you all about it. It was half dream, half reality: a woman did, I doubt not, enter your room: and that woman was—must have been—Grace Poole. You call her a strange being yourself: from all you know, you have reason so to call her —what did she do to me? what to Mason? In a state between sleeping and waking, you noticed her entrance and her actions; but feverish, almost delirious as you were, you ascribed to her a goblin appearance different from her own: the long disheveled hair, the swelled black face, the exaggerated stature, were figments of imagination; results of nightmare: the spiteful tearing of the veil was real. and it is like her. I see you would ask why I keep such a woman in my house: when we have been married a year and a day, I will tell you: but not now. Are you satisfied, Jane? Do you accept my solution of the mystery?"

I reflected, and in truth it appeared to me the only possible one. Satisfied I was not, but to please him I endeavored to appear so—relieved, I certainly did feel; so I answered him with a contented smile. And now, as it was long past one, I prepared to leave him.

"Does not Sophie sleep with Adèle in the nursery?" he asked, as I lit my candle.

"Yes, sir."

"And there is room enough in Adèle's little bed for you. You must share it with her tonight, Jane: it is no wonder that the incident you have related should make you nervous, and I would rather you did not sleep alone: promise me to go to the nursery."

"I shall be very glad to do so, sir."

"And fasten the door securely on the inside. Wake Sophie when you go upstairs, under pretense of requesting her to rouse you in good time tomorrow; for you must be dressed and have finished breakfast before eight. And now, no more somber thoughts: chase dull care away, Janet. Don't you hear to what soft whispers the wind has fallen? and there is no more beating of rain against the window-panes: look here"—he lifted up the curtain—"it is a lovely night!"

It was. Half heaven was pure and stainless: the clouds, now trooping before the wind, which had shifted to the west, were filing off eastward, in long, silvered columns. The moon shone peacefully. . . .

CHAPTER 26

SOPHIE CAME AT SEVEN to dress me; she was very long indeed in accomplishing her task; so long that Mr. Rochester, grown, I suppose, impatient of my delay, sent up to ask why I did not come. She was just fastening my veil (the plain square of blond after all) to my hair with a brooch; I hurried from under her hands as soon as I could.

"Stop!" she cried in French. "Look at yourself in the mirror: you have not taken one peep."

So I turned at the door. I saw a robed and veiled figure, so unlike my usual self that it seemed almost the image of a stranger. "Jane!" called a voice, and I hastened down. I was received at the foot of the stairs by Mr. Rochester.

"Lingerer," he said, "my brain is on fire with impatience; and you tarry so long!"

He took me into the dining room, surveyed me keenly all over, pronounced me "fair as a lily, and not only the pride of his life, but the desire of his eyes," and then telling me he would give me but ten minutes to eat some breakfast, he rang the bell. One of his lately hired servants, a footman, answered it.

"Is John getting the carriage ready?"

"Yes, sir."

"Is the luggage brought down?"

"They are bringing it down, sir."

"Go you to the church: see if Mr. Wood (the clergyman) and the clerk are there: return and tell me."

The church, as the reader knows, was but just beyond the gates; the footman soon returned.

"Mr. Wood is in the vestry, sir, putting on his surplice."

"And the carriage?"

"The horses are harnessing."

"We shall not want it to go to church; but it must be ready the moment we return: all the boxes and luggage arranged and strapped on, and the coachman in his seat."

"Yes, sir."

"Jane, are you ready?"

I rose. There were no groomsmen, no bridesmaids, no relatives to wait for or marshal: none but Mr. Rochester and I. Mrs. Fairfax stood in the hall as we passed. I would fain have spoken to her, but my hand was held by a grasp of iron. I was hurried along by a stride I could hardly follow; and to look at Mr. Rochester's face was to feel that not a second of delay would be tolerated for any purpose. I wonder what other bridegroom ever looked as he did—so bent up to a purpose, so grimly resolute: or who, under such steadfast brows, ever revealed such flaming and flashing eyes.

I know not whether the day was fair or foul; in descending the drive, I gazed neither on sky nor earth: my heart was with my eyes; and both seemed migrated into Mr. Rochester's frame. I wanted to see the invisible thing on which, as we went along, he appeared to fasten a glance fierce and fell. I wanted to feel the thoughts whose force he seemed breasting and resisting.

At the churchyard wicket he stopped: he discovered I was quite out of breath. "Am I cruel in my love?" he said. "Delay an instant: lean on me, Jane."

And now I can recall the picture of the grey old house of God rising calm before me, of a rook wheeling round the steeple, of a ruddy morning sky beyond. I remember something, too, of the green grave-mounds; and I have not forgotten, either, two figures of strangers, straying among the low hillocks, and reading the mementos graven on the few mossy head-stones. I noticed them, because as they saw us, they passed round to the back of the church; and I doubted not they were going to enter by the side-aisle door, and witness the ceremony. By Mr. Rochester they were not observed;

he was earnestly looking at my face, from which the blood had, I daresay, momentarily fled: for I felt my forehead dewy, and my cheeks and lips cold. When I rallied, which I soon did, he walked gently with me up the path to the porch.

We entered the quiet and humble temple; the priest waited in his white surplice at the lowly altar, the clerk beside him. All was still: two shadows only moved in a remote corner. My conjecture had been correct: the strangers had slipped in before us, and they now stood by the vault of the Rochesters, their backs toward us, viewing through the rails the old time-stained marble tomb, where a kneeling angel guarded the remains of Damer de Rochester, slain at Marston Moor in the time of the civil wars; and of Elizabeth, his wife.

Our place was taken at the communion rails. Hearing a cautious step behind me, I glanced over my shoulder. One of the strangers—a gentleman, evidently—was advancing up the chancel. The service began. The explanation of the intent of matrimony was gone through; and then the clergyman came a step farther forward, and, bending slightly toward Mr. Rochester, went on.

"I require and charge you both (as ye will answer at the dreadful day of judgment, when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed), that if either of you know any impediment why ye may not lawfully be joined together in matrimony, ye do now confess it; for be ye well assured that so many as are coupled together otherwise than God's word doth allow, are not joined together by God, neither is their matrimony lawful."

He paused, as the custom is. When is the pause after that sentence ever broken by reply? Not, perhaps, once in a hundred years. And the clergyman, who had not lifted his eyes from his book, and had held his breath but for a moment, was proceeding. His hand was already stretched toward Mr. Rochester, as his lips unclosed to ask, "Wilt thou have this woman for thy wedded wife?"—when a distinct and near voice said:

"The marriage cannot go on. I declare the existence of an impediment."

The clergyman looked up at the speaker, and stood mute; the clerk did the same; Mr. Rochester moved slightly, as if an earthquake had rolled under his feet: taking a firmer footing, and not turning his head or eyes, he said, "Proceed."

Profound silence fell when he had uttered that word, with deep but low intonation. Presently Mr. Wood said:

"I cannot proceed without some investigation into what has been asserted, and evidence of its truth or falsehood."

"The ceremony is quite broken off," subjoined the voice behind us. "I am in a condition to prove my allegation: an insuperable impediment to this marriage exists."

Mr. Rochester heard, but heeded not: he stood stubborn and rigid: making no movement, but to possess himself of my hand. What a hot and strong grasp he had!—and how like quarried marble was his pale, firm, massive forehead at this moment! How his eye shone, still, watchful, and yet wild beneath!

Mr. Wood seemed at a loss. "What is the nature of the impediment?" he asked. "Perhaps it may be got over—explained away?"

"Hardly," was the answer: "I have called it insuperable, and I speak advisedly."

The speaker came forward, and leaned on the rails. He continued, uttering each word distinctly, calmly, steadily, but not loudly.

"It simply consists in the existence of a previous marriage. Mr. Rochester has a wife now living."

My nerves vibrated to those low-spoken words as they had never vibrated to thunder—my blood felt their subtle violence as it had never felt frost or fire; but I was collected, and in no danger of swooning. I looked at Mr. Rochester: I made him look at me. His whole face was colorless rock: his eye was both spark and flint. He disavowed nothing; he scemed as if he would defy all things. Without speaking; without smiling; without seeming to recognize in me a human being, he only twined my waist with his arm, and riveted me to his side.

"Who are you?" he asked of the intruder.

"My name is Briggs—a solicitor of —— Street, London."

"And you would thrust on me a wife?"

"I would remind you of your lady's existence, sir; which the law recognizes, if you do not."

"Favor me with an account of her—with her name, her parentage, her place of abode."

"Certainly." Mr. Briggs calmly took a paper from his pocket, and read out in a sort of official, nasal voice:

"'I affirm and can prove that on the 20th of October, A.D., ——, (a date of fifteen years back) Edward Fairfax Rochester, of Thornfield Hall, in the county of ——, and of Ferndean Manor, in ——shire, England, was married to my sister, Bertha Antoinetta Mason,

daughter of Jonas Mason, merchant, and of Antoinetta his wife, a Creole—at ——church, Spanish Town, Jamaica. The record of the marriage will be found in the register of that church—a copy of it is now in my possession. Signed, Richard Mason."

"That—if a genuine document—may prove I have been married, but it does not prove that the woman mentioned therein as my wife is still living."

"She was living three months ago," returned the lawyer.

"How do you know?"

"I have a witness to the fact, whose testimony even you, sir, will scarcely controvert."

"Produce him-or go to hell."

"I will produce him first—he is on the spot: Mr. Mason, have the goodness to step forward."

Mr. Rochester, on hearing the name, set his teeth; he experienced, too, a sort of strong convulsive quiver; near to him as I was, I felt the spasmodic movement of fury or despair run through his frame. The second stranger, who had hitherto lingered in the background, now drew near; a pale face looked over the solicitor's shoulder—yes, it was Mason himself. Mr. Rochester turned and glared at him. His eye, as I have often said, was a black eye: it had now a tawny, nay a bloody light in its gloom; and his face flushed—olive cheek, and hueless forehead received a glow, as from spreading, ascending heart-fire: and he stirred, lifting his strong arm—he could have struck Mason—dashed him on the church floor—shocked by ruthless blow the breath from his body—but Mason shrank away, and cried faintly, "Good God!" Contempt fell cool on Mr. Rochester—his passion died as if a blight had shriveled it up: he only asked, "What have you to say?"

An inaudible reply escaped Mason's white lips.

"The devil is in it if you cannot answer distinctly. I again demand, what have you to say?"

"Sir—sir"—interrupted the clergyman, "do not forget you are in a sacred place." Then addressing Mason, he inquired gently, "Are you aware, sir, whether or not this gentleman's wife is still living?"

"Courage," urged the lawyer, "speak out."

"She is now living at Thornfield Hall," said Mason, in more articulate tones. "I saw her there last April. I am her brother."

"At Thornfield Hall!" ejaculated the clergyman. "Impossible! I am an old resident in this neighborhood, sir, and I never heard of a Mrs. Rochester at Thornfield Hall."

I saw a grim smile contort Mr. Rochester's lip, and he muttered: "No—by God! I took care that none should hear of it—or of her under that name." He mused—for ten minutes he held counsel with himself; he formed his resolve, and announced it:

"Enough—all shall bolt out at once, like the bullet from the barrel. Wood, close your book, and take off your surplice; John Green (to the clerk), leave the church: there will be no wedding today." The man obeyed.

Mr. Rochester continued, hardily and recklessly: "Bigamy is an ugly word! I meant, however, to be a bigamist: but fate has outmaneuvered me; or Providence has checked me—perhaps the last. I am little better than a devil at this moment; and, as my pastor there would tell me, deserve no doubt the sternest judgments of God—even to the quenchless fire and deathless worm. Gentlemen, my plan is broken up! What this lawyer and his client say is true: I have been married: and the woman to whom I was married lives! You say you never heard of a Mrs. Rochester at the house up yonder, Wood; but I daresay you have many a time inclined your ear to gossip about the mysterious lunatic kept there under watch and ward. Some have whispered to you that she is my bastard half-sister: some, my cast-off mistress; I now inform you that she is my wife, whom I married fifteen years ago, Bertha Mason by name; sister of this resolute personage, who is now, with his quivering limbs and white cheeks, showing you what a stout heart men may bear. Cheer up, Dick! never fear me! I'd almost as soon strike a woman as you. Bertha Mason is mad; and she came of a mad family; idiots and maniacs through three generations! Her mother, the Creole, was both a mad woman and a drunkard!—as I found out after I had wed the daughter, for they were silent on family secrets before. Bertha, like a dutiful child, copied her parent in both points. I had a charming partner—pure, wise, modest: you can fancy I was a happy man. I went through rich scenes! Oh! my experience has been heavenly, if you only knew it! But I owe you no further explanation. Briggs, Wood, Mason, I invite you all to come up to the house and visit Mrs. Poole's patient, and my wife! You shall see what sort of a being I was cheated into espousing, and judge whether or not I had a right to break the compact, and seek sympathy with something at least human. This girl," he continued, looking at me, "knew no more than you, Wood, of the disgusting secret: she thought all was fair and legal; and never dreamed she was going to be entrapped into a feigned union with a defrauded wretch, already

bound to a bad, mad, and embruted partner! Come all of you, follow!"

Still holding me fast, he left the church; the three gentlemen came after. At the front door of the hall we found the carriage.

"Take it back to the coach-house, John," said Mr. Rochester, coolly; "it will not be wanted today."

At our entrance, Mrs. Fairfax, Adèle, Sophie, Leah, advanced to meet and greet us.

"To the right about—every soul!" cried the master, "away with your congratulations! Who wants them? Not I! They are fifteen years too late!"

He passed on and ascended the stairs, still holding my hand, and still beckoning the gentlemen to follow him; which they did. We mounted the first staircase, passed up the gallery, proceeded to the third story: the low, black door, opened by Mr. Rochester's master key, admitted us to the tapestried room, with its great bed, and its pictorial cabinet.

"You know this place, Mason," said our guide; "she bit and stabbed you here."

He lifted the hangings from the wall, uncovering the second door: this, too, he opened. In a room without a window, there burned a fire, guarded by a high and strong fender, and a lamp suspended from the ceiling by a chain. Grace Poole bent over the fire, apparently cooking something in a saucepan. In the deep shade, at the farther end of the room, a figure ran backward and forward. What it was, whether beast or human being, one could not, at first sight, tell: it groveled, seemingly, on all fours; it snatched and growled like some strange wild animal: but it was covered with clothing; and a quantity of dark, grizzled hair, wild as a mane, hid its head and face.

"Good-morrow, Mrs. Poole!" said Mr. Rochester. "How are you? and how is your charge today?"

"We're tolerable, sir, I thank you," replied Grace, lifting the boiling mess carefully on to the hob: "rather snappish, but not 'rageous."

A fierce cry seemed to give the lie to her favorable report: the clothed hyena rose up, and stood tall on its hind feet.

"Ah, sir, she sees you!" exclaimed Grace: "you'd better not stay." "Only a few moments, Grace: you must allow me a few moments." "Take care then, sir! For God's sake, take care!"

The maniac bellowed: she parted her shaggy locks from her visage, and gazed wildly at her visitors. I recognized well that purple face, those bloated features. Mrs. Poole advanced.

"Keep out of the way," said Mr. Rochester, thrusting her aside: "she has no knife, now, I suppose? and I'm on my guard."

"One never knows what she has, sir: she is so cunning; it is not in mortal discretion to fathom her craft."

"We had better leave her," whispered Mason.

"Go to the devil!" was his brother-in-law's recommendation.

"Ware!" cried Grace. The three gentlemen retreated simultaneously. Mr. Rochester flung me behind him: the lunatic sprang and grappled his throat viciously, and laid her teeth to his cheek: they struggled. She was a big woman, in stature almost equaling her husband, and corpulent besides: she showed virile force in the contest—more than once she almost throttled him, athletic as he was. He could have settled her with a well-planted blow; but he would not strike: he would only wrestle. At last he mastered her arms; Grace Poole gave him a cord, and he pinioned them behind her: with more rope, which was at hand, he bound her to a chair. The operation was performed amid the fiercest yells, and the most convulsive plunges. Mr. Rochester then turned to the spectators: he looked at them with a smile both acrid and desolate.

"That is my wife," said he. "Such is the sole conjugal embrace I am ever to know—such are the endearments which are to solace my leisure hours! And this is what I wished to have" (laying his hand on my shoulder): "this young girl, who stands so grave and quiet at the mouth of hell, looking collectedly at the gambols of a demon. I wanted her just as a change after that fierce ragout. Wood and Briggs, look at the difference! Compare these clear eyes with the red balls yonder—this face with that mask—this form with that bulk; then judge me, priest of the gospel and man of the law, and remember, with what judgment ye judge ye shall be judged! Off with you now. I must shut up my prize."

We all withdrew. Mr. Rochester stayed a moment behind us, to give some further order to Grace Poole. The solicitor addressed me as he descended the stair.

"You, madam," said he, "are clear from all blame: your uncle will be glad to hear it—if, indeed, he should be still living—when Mr. Mason returns to Madeira."

"My uncle! What of him? Do you know him?"

"Mr. Mason does: Mr. Eyre has been the Funchal correspondent of his house for some years. When your uncle received your letter intimating the contemplated union between yourself and Mr. Rochester, Mr. Mason, who was staying at Madeira to recruit his health, on his way back to Jamaica, happened to be with him. Mr. Eyre mentioned the intelligence; for he knew that my client here was acquainted with a gentleman of the name of Rochester. Mr. Mason, astonished and distressed as you may suppose, revealed the real state of matters. Your uncle, I am sorry to say, is now on a sick bed; from which, considering the nature of his disease—decline—and the stage it has reached, it is unlikely he will ever rise. He could not then hasten to England himself, to extricate you from the snare into which you had fallen, but he implored Mr. Mason to lose no time in taking steps to prevent the false marriage. He referred him to me for assistance. I used all dispatch, and am thankful I was not too late: as you, doubtless, must be also. Were I not morally certain that your uncle will be dead ere you reach Madeira, I would advise you to accompany Mr. Mason back; but as it is, I think you had better remain in England till you can hear further either from or of Mr. Eyre. Have we anything else to stay for?" he inquired of Mr. Mason.

"No, no—let us be gone," was the anxious reply; and without waiting to take leave of Mr. Rochester, they made their exit at the hall door. The clergyman stayed to exchange a few sentences, either of admonition or reproof, with his haughty parishioner; this duty done, he too departed.

I heard him go as I stood at the half-open door of my own room, to which I had now withdrawn. The house cleared, I shut myself in, fastened the bolt that none might intrude, and proceeded not to weep, not to mourn—I was yet too calm for that—but mechanically to take off the wedding dress, and replace it by the stuff gown I had worn yesterday, as I thought for the last time. I then sat down: I felt weak and tired. I leaned my arms on a table, and my head dropped on them. . . .

My eyes were covered and closed: eddying darkness seemed to swim round me, and reflection came in as black and confused a flow. Self-abandoned, relaxed, and effortless, I seemed to have laid me down in the dried-up bed of a great river; I heard a flood loosened in remote mountains, and felt the torrent come: to rise I had no will, to flee I had no strength. I lay faint; longing to be dead. One idea only still throbbed life-like within me—a remembrance of God: it begot an unuttered prayer. . . .

"Be not far from me, for trouble is near. There is none to help."

It was near, and as I had lifted no petition to Heaven to avert it

. . . it came; in full, heavy swing the torrent poured over me. The whole consciousness of my life lorn, my love lost, my hope quenched, my faith deathstruck, swayed full and mighty above me in one sullen mass. . . .

CHAPTER 27

SOME TIME IN THE AFTERNOON I raised my head, and looking round and seeing the western sun gilding the sign of its decline on the wall, I asked, "What am I to do?"

But the answer my mind gave—"Leave Thornfield at once"—was so prompt, so dread, that I stopped my ears. I said, I could not bear such words now. "That I am not Edward Rochester's bride is the least part of my woe," I alleged: "that I have wakened out of most glorious dreams, and found them all void and vain, is a horror I could bear and master; but that I must leave him decidedly, instantly, entirely, is intolerable. I cannot do it. . . ."

I rose up suddenly, terror-struck at the solitude. I perceived that I was sickening from excitement and inanition; neither meat nor drink had passed my lips that day, for I had taken no breakfast. And, with a strange pang, I now reflected that, long as I had been shut up here, no message had been sent to ask how I was, or to invite me to come down: not even little Adèle had tapped at the door; not even Mrs. Fairfax had sought me. "Friends always forget those whom fortune forsakes," I murmured, as I undrew the bolt and passed out. I stumbled over an obstacle: my head was still dizzy, my sight was dim, and my limbs were feeble. I could not soon recover myself. I fell, but not on to the ground: an out-stretched arm caught me; I looked up—I was supported by Mr. Rochester, who sat in a chair across my chamber threshold.

"You have come out at last," he said. "Well, I have been waiting for you long, and listening: yet not one movement have I heard, nor one sob: five minutes more of that death-like hush, and I should have forced the lock like a burglar. So, you shun me?—you shut yourself up and grieve alone! I would rather you had come and upbraided me with vehemence. You are passionate: I expected a scene of some kind. I was prepared for the hot rain of tears; only I wanted

them to be shed on my breast: now a senseless floor has received them, or your drenched handkerchief. But I err: you have not wept at all! I see a white cheek and a faded eye, but no trace of tears. I suppose, then, your heart has been weeping blood?

"Well, Jane; not a word of reproach? Nothing bitter-nothing poignant? Nothing to cut a feeling or sting a passion? You sit quietly where I have placed you, and regard me with a weary, passive look.

"Jane, I never meant to wound you thus. If the man who had but one little ewe lamb that was dear to him as a daughter, that ate of his bread and drank of his cup, and lay in his bosom, had by some mistake slaughtered it at the shambles, he would not have rucd his bloody blunder more than I now rue mine. Will you ever forgive me?"

There was such deep remorse in his eye, such true pity in his tone, such manly energy in his manner; and, besides, there was such unchanged love in his whole look and mien—I forgave him all: yet not in words, not outwardly; only at my heart's core.

"You know I am a scoundrel, Jane?" ere long he inquired wistfully-wondering, I suppose, at my continued silence and tameness: the result rather of weakness than of will.

"Yes, sir."

"Then tell me so roundly and sharply—don't spare me."
"I cannot: I am tired and sick. I want some water." He heaved a sort of shuddering sigh, and taking me in his arms, carried me downstairs. At first I did not know to what room he had borne me; all was cloudy to my glazed sight: presently I felt the reviving warmth of a fire; for, summer as it was, I had become icy cold in my chamber. He put wine to my lips; I tasted it and revived; then I ate something he offered me, and was soon myself. I was in the library—sitting in his chair—he was quite near. "If I could go out of life now, without too sharp a pang, it would be well for me," I thought; "then I should not have to make the effort of cracking my heart-strings in rending them from among Mr. Rochester's. I must leave him, it appears. I do not want to leave him-I cannot leave him."

"How are you now, Jane?"

"Much better, sir: I shall be well soon."

"Taste the wine again, Jane."

I obeyed him; then he put the glass on the table, stood before me, and looked at me attentively. Suddenly he turned away, with an inarticulate exclamation, full of passionate emotion of some kind; he walked fast through the room and came back: he stooped toward

me as if to kiss me; but I remembered caresses were now forbidden. I turned my face away, and put his aside.

"What!—how is this?" he exclaimed hastily. "Oh, I know! you won't kiss the husband of Bertha Mason? You consider my arms filled, and my embraces appropriated?"

"At any rate, there is neither room nor claim for me, sir."

"Why, Jane? I will spare you the trouble of much talking: I will answer for you—because I have a wife already, you would reply. I guess rightly?"

"Yes."

"If you think so, you must have a strange opinion of me; you must regard me as a plotting profligate—a base and low rake who has been simulating disinterested love in order to draw you into a snare deliberately laid, and strip you of honor, and rob you of self-respect. What do you say to that? I see you can say nothing: in the first place, you are faint, still, and have enough to do to draw your breath; in the second place, you cannot yet accustom yourself to accuse and revile me; and, besides, the flood-gates of tears are opened, and they would rush out if you spoke much; and you have no desire to expostulate, to upbraid, to make a scene: you are thinking how to act—talking, you consider, is of no use. I know you—I am on my guard."

"Sir, I do not wish to act against you," I said; and my unsteady voice warned me to curtail my sentence.

"Not in your sense of the word but in mine, you are scheming to destroy me. You have as good as said that I am a married man—as a married man you will shun me, keep out of my way: just now you have refused to kiss me. You intend to make yourself a complete stranger to me; to live under this roof only as Adèle's governess; if ever I say a friendly word to you; if ever a friendly feeling inclines you again to me, you will say, 'That man had nearly made me his mistress: I must be ice and rock to him'; and ice and rock you will accordingly become."

I cleared and steadied my voice to reply: "All is changed about me, sir; I must change too—there is no doubt of that: and to avoid fluctuations of feeling, and continual combats with recollections and associations, there is only one way—Adèle must have a new governess, sir."

"Oh, Adèle will go to school—I have settled that already; nor do I mean to torment you with the hideous associations and recollections of Thornfield Hall. Jane, you shall not stay here, nor will I. I was

wrong ever to bring you to Thornfield Hall, knowing as I did how it was haunted. I charged them to conceal from you, before I ever saw you, all knowledge of the curse of the place; merely because I feared Adèle never would have a governess to stay if she knew with what inmate she was housed, and my plans would not permit me to remove the maniac elsewhere—though I possess an old house, Ferndean Manor, even more retired and hidden than this, where I could have lodged her safely enough, had not a scruple about the unhealthiness of the situation, in the heart of a wood, made my conscience recoil from the arrangement. Probably those damp walls would soon have eased me of her charge: but to each villain his own vice; and mine is not a tendency to indirect assassination, even of what I most hate.

"Concealing the mad-woman's neighborhood from you, however, was something like covering a child with a cloak, and laying it down near a upas-tree: that demon's vicinage is poisoned, and always was. But I'll shut up Thornfield Hall: I'll nail up the front door, and board the lower windows; I'll give Mrs. Poole two hundred a year to live here with my wife, as you term that fearful hag: Grace will do much for money, and she shall have her son, the keeper at Grimsby Retreat, to bear her company and be at hand to give her aid, in the paroxysms, when my wife is prompted by her familiar to burn people in their beds at night, to stab them, to bite their flesh from their bones, and so on—"

"Sir," I interrupted him, "you are inexorable for that unfortunate lady: you speak of her with hate—with vindictive antipathy. It is cruel—she cannot help being mad."

"Jane, my little darling (so I will call you, for so you are), you don't know what you are talking about; you misjudge me again: it is not because she is mad I hate her. If you were mad, do you think I should hate you?"

"I do indeed, sir."

"Then you are mistaken, and you know nothing about me, and nothing about the sort of love of which I am capable. Every atom of your flesh is as dear to me as my own: in pain and sickness it would still be dear. Your mind is my treasure, and if it were broken, it would be my treasure still. I should not shrink from you with disgust as I did from her: in your quiet moments you should have no watcher and no nurse but me; and I could hang over you with untiring tenderness, though you gave me no smile in return; and never

weary of gazing into your eyes, though they had no longer a ray of recognition for me. But why do I follow that train of ideas? I was talking of removing you from Thornfield. All, you know, is prepared for prompt departure: tomorrow you shall go. I only ask you to endure one more night under this roof, Jane: and then, farewell to its miseries and terrors forever! I have a place to repair to, which will be a secure sanctuary from hateful reminiscences, from unwelcome intrusion—even from falsehood and slander."

"And take Adèle with you, sir," I interrupted; "she will be a companion for you."

"What do you mean, Jane? I told you I would send Adèle to school: and what do I want with a child for a companion? and not my own child, a French dancer's bastard. Why do you importune me about her? I say, why do you assign Adèle to me for a companion?"

"You spoke of a retirement, sir; and retirement and solitude are dull: too dull for you."

"Solitude! solitude!" he reiterated, with irritation. "I see I must come to an explanation. I don't know what sphynxlike expression is forming in your countenance. You are to share my solitude. Do you understand?"

I shook my head: it required a degree of courage, excited as he was becoming, even to risk that mute sign of dissent. He had been walking fast about the room, and he stopped, as if suddenly rooted to one spot. He looked at me long and hard: I turned my eyes from him, fixed them on the fire, and tried to assume and maintain a quiet, collected aspect.

"Now for the hitch in Jane's character," he said at last, speaking more calmly than from his look I had expected him to speak. "The reel of silk has run smoothly enough so far; but I always knew there would come a knot and a puzzle: here it is. Now for vexation, and exasperation, and endless trouble! By God! I long to exert a fraction of Samson's strength, and break the entanglement like tow!"

He recommenced his walk, but soon again stopped, and this time just before me.

"Jane! will you hear reason?" (he stooped and approached his lips to my ear) "because, if you won't, I'll try violence." His voice was hoarse; his look that of a man who is just about to burst an insufferable bond and plunge headlong into wild license. I saw that in another moment, and with one impetus of frenzy more, I should be

able to do nothing with him. The present—the passing second of time —was all I had in which to control and restrain him: a movement of repulsion, flight, fear, would have sealed my doom, and his. But I was not afraid: not in the least. I felt an inward power; a sense of influence, which supported me. The crisis was perilous; but not without its charm: such as the Indian, perhaps, feels when he slips over the rapid in his canoe. I took hold of his clenched hand; loosened the contorted fingers; and said to him, soothingly,

"Sit down; I'll talk to you as long as you like, and hear all you have to say, whether reasonable or unreasonable."

He sat down: but he did not get leave to speak directly. I had been struggling with tears for some time: I had taken great pains to repress them, because I knew he would not like to see me weep. Now, however, I considered it well to let them flow as freely and as long as they liked. If the flood annoyed him, so much the better. So I gave way and cried heartily.

Soon I heard him earnestly entreating me to be composed. I said I could not while he was in such a passion.

"But I am not angry, Jane: I only love you too well; and you had steeled your little pale face with such a resolute, frozen look, I could not endure it. Hush, now, and wipe your eyes."

His softened voice announced that he was subdued; so I, in my turn, became calm. Now he made an effort to rest his head on my shoulder, but I would not permit it. Then he would draw me to him: no.

"Jane! Jane!" he said—in such an accent of bitter sadness it thrilled along every nerve I had; "you don't love me, then? It was only my station, and the rank of my wife, that you valued? Now that you think me disqualified to become your husband, you recoil from my touch as if I were some toad or ape."

These words cut me: yet what could I do or say? I ought probably to have done or said nothing: but I was so tortured by a sense of remorse at thus hurting his feelings, I could not control the wish to drop balm where I had wounded.

"I do love you," I said, "more than ever: but I must not show or indulge the feeling: and this is the last time I must express it."

"The last time, Jane! What! do you think you can live with me, and see me daily, and yet, if you still love me, be always cold and distant?"

"No, sir; that I am certain I could not; and therefore I see there is but one way: but you will be furious if I mention it."

"Oh, mention it! If I storm, you have the art of weeping."

"Mr. Rochester, I must leave you."

"For how long, Jane? For a few minutes, while you smooth your hair—which is somewhat disheveled; and bathe your face—which looks feverish?"

"I must leave Adèle and Thornfield. I must part with you for my whole life. I must begin a new existence among strange faces and strange scenes."

"Of course: I told you you should. I pass over the madness about parting from me. You mean you must become a part of me. As to the new existence, it is all right: you shall yet be my wife: I am not married. You shall be Mrs. Rochester—both virtually and nominally. I shall keep only to you so long as you and I live. You shall go to a place I have in the south of France: a white-washed villa on the shores of the Mediterranean. There you shall live a happy, and guarded, and most innocent life. Never fear that I wish to lure you into error—to make you my mistress. Why do you shake your head? Jane, you must be reasonable; or in truth I shall again become frantic."

His voice and hand quivered: his large nostrils dilated: his eyes blazed: still I dared to speak:

"Sir, your wife is living: that is a fact acknowledged this morning by yourself. If I lived with you as you desire, I should then be your mistress; to say otherwise is sophistical—is false."

"Jane, I am not a gentle-tempered man—you forget that: I am not long-enduring; I am not cool and dispassionate. Out of pity to me and yourself, put your finger on my pulse, feel how it throbs, and—beware!"

He bared his wrist, and offered it to me: the blood was forsaking his cheek and lips, they were growing livid; I was distressed on all hands. To agitate him thus deeply by a resistance he so abhorred, was cruel: to yield was out of the question. I did what human beings do instinctively when they are driven to utter extremity—looked for aid to one higher than man: the words "God help me!" burst involuntarily from my lips.

"I am a fool!" cried Mr. Rochester, suddenly. "I keep telling her I am not married, and do not explain to her why. I forget she knows

nothing of the character of that woman, or of the circumstances attending my infernal union with her. Oh, I am certain Jane will agree with me in opinion, when she knows all that I know! Just put your hand in mine, Janet—that I may have the evidence of touch as well as sight, to prove you are near me—and I will in a few words show you the real state of the case. Can you listen to me?"

"Yes, sir; for hours if you will."

"I ask only minutes. Jane, did you ever hear, or know that I was not the eldest son of my house: that I had once a brother older than I?"

"I remember Mrs. Fairfax told me so once."

"And did you ever hear that my father was an avaricious, grasping man?"

"I have understood something to that effect."

"Well, Jane, being so, it was his resolution to keep the property together; he could not bear the idea of dividing his estate and leaving me a fair portion: all, he resolved, should go to my brother, Rowland. Yet as little could he endure that a son of his should be a poor man. I must be provided for by a wealthy marriage. He sought me a partner betimes. Mr. Mason, a West India planter and merchant, was his old acquaintance. He was certain his possessions were real and vast: he made inquiries. Mr. Mason, he found, had a son and daughter; and he learned from him that he could and would give the latter a fortune of thirty thousand pounds: that sufficed. When I left college, I was sent out to Jamaica, to espouse a bride already courted for me. My father said nothing about her money; but he told me Miss Mason was the boast of Spanish Town for her beauty: and this was no lie. I found her a fine woman, in the style of Blanche Ingram; tall, dark, majestic. Her family wished to secure me because I was of a good race; and so did she. They showed her to me in parties, splendidly dressed. I seldom saw her alone, and had very little private conversation with her. She flattered me, and lavishly displayed for my pleasure her charms and accomplishments. All the men in her circle seemed to admire her and envy me. I was dazzled, stimulated: my senses were excited; and being ignorant, raw, and inexperienced, I thought I loved her. There is no folly so besotted that the idiotic rivalries of society, the prurience, the rashness, the blindness of youth, will not hurry a man to its commission. Her relatives encouraged me; competitors piqued me; she allured me: a marriage was achieved almost before I knew where I was. Oh,

I have no respect for myself when I think of that act!—an agony of inward contempt masters me. I never loved, I never esteemed, I did not even know her. . . .

"My bride's mother I had never seen: I understood she was dead. The honeymoon over, I learned my mistake; she was only mad, and shut up in a lunatic asylum. There was a younger brother, too; a complete dumb idiot. The elder one, whom you have seen (and whom I cannot hate, while I abhor all his kindred, because he has some grains of affection in his feeble mind; shown in the continued interest he takes in his wretched sister and also in a dog-like attachment he once bore me), will probably be in the same state one day. My father and my brother Rowland knew all this; but they thought only of the thirty thousand pounds, and joined in the plot against me.

"These were vile discoveries; but, except for the treachery of concealment, I should have made them no subject of reproach to my wife: even when I found her nature wholly alien to mine; her tastes obnoxious to me; her cast of mind common, low, narrow, and singularly incapable of being led to anything higher, expanded to anything larger—when I found that I could not pass a single evening nor a single hour of the day with her in comfort; that kindly conversation could not be sustained between us, because whatever topic I started, immediately received from her a turn at once coarse and trite, perverse and imbecile—when I perceived that I should never have a quiet or settled household, because no servant would bear the continued outbreaks of her violent and unreasonable temper, or the vexations of her absurd, contradictory, exacting orders—even then I restrained myself.

"Jane, I will not trouble you with abominable details: some strong words shall express what I have to say. I lived with that woman upstairs four years, and before that time she had tried me indeed: her character ripened and developed with frightful rapidity; her vices sprang up fast and rank: they were so strong, only cruelty could check them; and I would not use cruelty. Bertha Mason, the true daughter of an infamous mother, dragged me through all the hideous and degrading agonies which must attend a man bound to a wife at once intemperate and unchaste.

"My brother in the interval was dead; and at the end of the four years my father died too. I was rich enough now—yet poor to hideous indigence: a nature the most gross, impure, deprayed I ever saw,

was associated with mine, and called by the law and by society a part of me. And I could not rid myself of it by any legal proceedings: for the doctors now discovered that my wife was mad—her excesses had prematurely developed the germs of insanity. Jane, you don't like my narrative; you look almost sick—shall I defer the rest to another day?"

"No, sir, finish it now. I pity you—I do earnestly pity you. What did you do when you found she was mad?"

"Jane—I approached the verge of despair: a remnant of self-respect was all that intervened between me and the gulf. In the eyes of the world, I was doubtless covered with grimy dishonor: but I resolved to be clean in my own sight—and to the last I repudiated the contamination of her crimes, and wrenched myself from connection with her mental defects. Still, society associated my name and person with hers; I knew that while she lived I could never be the husband of another and better wife; and, though five years my senior (her family and her father had lied to me even in the particular of her age), she was likely to live as long as I, being as robust in frame as she was infirm in mind. Thus, at the age of twenty-six, I was hopeless.

"One night I had been awakened by her yells-since the medical men had pronounced her mad, she had of course been shut up—it was a fiery West Indian night; one of the description that frequently precedes the hurricanes of those climates. Being unable to sleep in bed, I got up and opened the windów. The air was like sulphursteams—I could find no refreshment anywhere. Mosquitoes came buzzing in and hummed sullenly round the room; the sea, which I could hear from thence, rumbled dull like an earthquake-black clouds were casting up over it; the moon was setting in the waves, broad and red, like a hot cannon-ball-she threw her last bloody glance over a world quivering with the ferment of tempest. I was physically influenced by the atmosphere and scene, and my ears were filled with the curses the maniac still shrieked out; wherein she momentarily mingled my name with such a tone of demon-hate, with such language!—no professed harlot ever had a fouler vocabulary than she. Though two rooms off, I heard every word, the thin partitions of the West India house opposing but slight obstruction to her wolfish cries.

"'This life,' said I at last, 'is hell! this is the air—those are the sounds of the bottomless pit! I have a right to deliver myself from

it if I can. The sufferings of this mortal state will leave me with the heavy flesh that now cumbers my soul. Of the fanatic's burning eternity I have no fear: there is not a future state worse than this present one—let me break away and go home to God!'

"I said this while I knelt down at and unlocked a trunk which

"I said this while I knelt down at and unlocked a trunk which contained a brace of loaded pistols: I meant to shoot myself. I only entertained the intention for a moment; for, not being insane, the crisis of exquisite and unalloyed despair which had originated the wish and design of self-destruction, was past in a second.

"A wind fresh from Europe blew over the ocean and rushed through the open casement: the storm broke, streamed, thundered, blazed, and the air grew pure. I then framed and fixed a resolution. While I walked under the dripping orange-trees of my wet garden, and among its drenched pomegranates and pineapples, and while the refulgent dawn of the tropics kindled round me—I reasoned thus, Jane—and now listen; for it was true Wisdom that consoled me in that hour, and showed me the right path to follow.

"The sweet wind from Europe was still whispering in the refreshed leaves, and the Atlantic was thundering in glorious liberty; my heart, dried up and scorched for a long time, swelled to the tone, and filled with living blood—my being longed for renewal—my soul thirsted for a pure draught. I saw Hope revive—and felt Regeneration possible. From a flowery arch at the bottom of my garden I gazed over the sea—bluer than the sky; the old world was beyond; clear prospects opened thus:

"'Go,' said Hope, 'and live again in Europe: there it is not known what a sullied name you bear, nor what a filthy burden is bound to you. You may take the maniac with you to England; confine her with due attendance and precautions at Thornfield: then travel yourself to what clime you will, and form what new tie you like. That woman, who has so abused your long suffering, so sullied your name, so outraged your honor, so blighted your youth—is not your wife; nor are you her husband. See that she is cared for as her condition demands, and you have done all that God and Humanity require of you. Let her identity, her connection with yourself, be buried in oblivion: you are bound to impart them to no living being. Place her in safety and comfort: shelter her degradation with secrecy, and leave her.'

"I acted precisely on this suggestion. My father and brother had not made my marriage known to their acquaintance; because, in the very first letter I wrote to apprise them of the union—having already

begun to experience extreme disgust of its consequences; and from the family character and constitution, seeing a hideous future opening to me—I added an urgent charge to keep it secret; and very soon, the infamous conduct of the wife my father had selected for me was such as to make him blush to own her as his daughter-in-law. Far from desiring to publish the connection, he became as anxious to conceal it as myself.

"To England, then, I conveyed her; a fearful voyage I had with such a monster in the vessel. Glad was I when I at last got her to Thornfield, and saw her safely lodged in that third-story room, of whose secret inner cabinet she has now for ten years made a wild beast's den. I had some trouble in finding an attendant for her. . . . At last I hired Grace Poole, from the Grimsby Retreat. She and the surgeon, Carter (who dressed Mason's wounds that night he was stabbed and worried), are the only two I have ever admitted to my confidence. Mrs. Fairfax may indeed have suspected something; but she could have gained no precise knowledge as to facts. Grace has, on the whole, proved a good keeper; though, owing partly to a fault of her own, of which it appears nothing can cure her, and which is incident to her harassing profession, her vigilance has been more than once lulled and baffled. The lunatic is both cunning and malignant; she has never failed to take advantage of her guardian's temporary lapses; once to secrete the knife with which she stabbed her brother, and twice to possess herself of the key of her cell, and issue therefrom in the nighttime. On the first of these occasions, she perpetrated the attempt to burn me in my bed; on the second she paid that ghastly visit to you. I thank Providence, who watched over you, that she then spent her fury on your wedding apparel; which perhaps brought back vague reminiscences of her own bridal days. But on what might have happened, I cannot endure to reflect. When I think of the thing which flew at my throat this morning, my blood curdles---"

"And what, sir," I asked, while he paused, "did you do when you had settled her here? Where did you go?"

"What did I do, Jane? I transformed myself into a Will-o'-thewisp. Where did I go? I pursued wanderings as wild as those of the March-spirit. I sought the Continent, and went devious through all its lands. My fixed desire was to seek and find a good and intelligent woman, whom I could love: a contrast to the fury I left at Thorn-field—"

"But you could not marry, sir."

"I had determined, and was convinced that I could and ought. It was not my original intention to deceive, as I have deceived you. I meant to tell my tale plainly, and make my proposals openly: and it appeared to me so absolutely rational that I should be considered free to love and be loved, I never doubted some woman might be found willing and able to understand my case and accept me, in spite of the curse with which I was burdened."

"Well, sir?"

". . . For ten long years I roved about, living first in one capital, then another. Provided with plenty of money, and the passport of an old name, I could choose my own society: no circles were closed against me. I sought my ideal of a woman among English ladies, French countesses, Italian signoras, and German gräfinnen. I could not find her. Sometimes, for a fleeting moment, I thought I caught a glance, heard a tone, beheld a form, which announced the realization of my dream: but I was presently undeceived. You are not to suppose that I desired perfection, either of mind or person. I longed only for what suited me—for the antipodes of the Creole: and I longed vainly. Among them all I found not one, whom, had I been ever so free, I-warned as I was of the risks, the horrors, the loathings of incongruous unions-would have asked to marry me. Disappointment made me reckless. I tried dissipation—never debauchery: that I hated, and hate. That was my Indian Messalina's attribute: rooted disgust at it and her restrained me much, even in pleasure. Any enjoyment that bordered on riot seemed to approach me to her and her vices, and I eschewed it.

"Yet I could not live alone; so I tried the companionship of mistresses. The first I chose was Céline Varens—another of those steps which make a man spurn himself when he recalls them. You already know what she was, and how my liaison with her terminated. She had two successors: an Italian, Giacinta, and a German, Clara; both considered singularly handsome. What was their beauty to me in a few weeks? Giacinta was unprincipled and violent: I tired of her in three months. Clara was honest and quiet; but heavy, mindless, unimpressible: not one whit to my taste. I was glad to give her a sufficient sum to set her up in a good line of business, and so get decently rid of her. But, Jane, I see by your face you are not forming a very favorable opinion of me just now. You think me an unfeeling, loose-principled rake, don't you?"

"I don't like you so well as I have done sometimes, indeed, sir. Did it not seem to you in the least wrong to live in that way: first with one mistress and then another? You talk of it as a mere matter of course."

"It was with me; and I did not like it. It was a groveling fashion of existence; I should never like to return to it. Hiring a mistress is the next worse thing to buying a slave: both are often by nature, and always by position, inferior; and to live familiarly with inferiors is degrading. I now hate the recollection of the time I passed with Céline, Giacinta, and Clara."

I felt the truth of these words; and I drew from them the certain inference, that if I were so far to forget myself and all the teaching that had ever been instilled into me, as—under any pretext—with any justification—through any temptation—to become the successor of these poor girls, he would one day regard me with the same feeling which now in his mind desecrated their memory. I did not give utterance to this conviction: it was enough to feel it. I impressed it on my heart, that it might remain there to serve me as aid in the time of trial. . . .

"But let me come to the point. Last January, rid of all mistresses—in a harsh, bitter frame of mind, the result of a useless, roving, lonely life—corroded with disappointment, sourly disposed against all men, and especially against all womankind, for I began to regard the notion of an intellectual, faithful, loving woman as a mere dream—recalled by business, I came back to England.

"On a frosty winter afternoon, I rode in sight of Thornfield Hall. Abhorred spot! I expected no peace—no pleasure there. On a stile in Hay Lane I saw a quiet little figure sitting by itself. I passed it as negligently as I did the pollard willow opposite to it: I had no presentiment of what it would be to me; no inward warning that the arbitress of my life waited there in humble guise. I did not know it, even when, on the occasion of Mesrour's accident, it came up and gravely offered me help. Childish and slender creature! It seemed as if a linnet had hopped to my foot and proposed to bear me on its tiny wing. I was surly: but the thing would not go: it stood by me with strange perseverance, and looked and spoke with a sort of authority. I must be aided, and by that hand: and aided I was. . . .

"The next day I observed you—myself unseen—for half an hour, while you played with Adèle in the gallery. It was a snowy day, I recollect, and you could not go out of doors. I was in my room; the

door was ajar: I could both listen and watch. Adèle claimed your outward attention for a while; yet I fancied your thoughts were elsewhere: but you were very patient with her, my little Jane; you talked to her and amused her a long time. When at last she left you, you lapsed at once into deep reverie: you betook yourself slowly to pace the gallery. Now and then, in passing a casement, you glanced out at the thick-falling snow; you listened to the sobbing wind, and again you paced gently on and dreamed. I think those day visions were not dark: there was a pleasurable illumination in your eye occasionally, a soft excitement in your aspect, which told of no bitter, bilious, hypochondriac brooding: your look revealed rather the sweet musings of youth, when its spirit follows on willing wings the flight of Hope, up and on to an ideal heaven. The voice of Mrs. Fairfax, speaking to a servant in the hall, wakened you: and how curiously speaking to a servant in the hall, wakened you: and how curiously you smiled to and at yourself, Jane! There was much sense in your smile: it was very shrewd, and seemed to make light of your own abstraction.

abstraction.

"Impatiently I waited for evening, when I might summon you to my presence. An unusual—to me—a perfectly new character I suspected was yours: I desired to search it deeper, and know it better. You entered the room with a look and air at once shy and independent: you were quaintly dressed—much as you are now. I made you talk: cre long I found you full of strange contrasts. Your garb and manner were restricted by rule; your air was often diffident, and altogether that of one refined by nature, but absolutely unused to society, and a good deal afraid of making herself disadvantageously conspicuous by some solecism or blunder; yet when addressed, you lifted a keen, a daring, and a glowing eye to your interlocutor's face: there was penetration and power in each glance you gave; when plied by close questions, you found ready and round answers. Very soon, you seemed to get used to me: I believe you felt the existence of sympathy between you and your grim and cross master, Jane; for it was astonishing to see how quickly a certain pleasant ease tranquilized your manner: snarl as I would, you showed no surprise, fear, annoyance, or displeasure at my moroseness; you watched me, and now and then smiled at me with a simple yet sagacious grace I cannot describe. I was at once content and yet sagacious grace I cannot describe. I was at once content and stimulated with what I saw. Yet, for a long time, I treated you distantly, and sought your company rarely. I was an intellectual epicure, and wished to prolong the gratification of making this novel and

piquant acquaintance: besides, I was for a while troubled with a haunting fear that if I handled the flower freely its bloom would fade—the sweet charm of freshness would leave it. Moreover, I wished to see whether you would seek me if I shunned you—but you did not; you kept in the schoolroom as still as your own desk and easel; if by chance I met you, you passed me as soon, and with as little token of recognition, as was consistent with respect. Your habitual expression in those days, Jane, was a thoughtful look; not despondent, for you were not sickly; but not buoyant, for you had little hope, and no actual pleasure. I wondered what you thought of me—or if you ever thought of me; to find this out, I resumed my notice of you. There was something glad in your glance, and genial in your manner, when you conversed: I saw you had a social heart; it was the silent schoolroom—it was the tedium of your life—that made you mournful. I permitted myself the delight of being kind to you; kindness stirred emotion soon: your face became soft in expression, your tones gentle: I liked my name pronounced by your lips in a grateful happy accent. I used to enjoy a chance meeting with you, Jane, at this time: there was a curious hesitation in your manner: you glanced at me with a slight trouble—a hovering doubt: you did not know what my caprice might be—whether I was going to play the master and be stern, or the friend and be benignant. I was now too fond of you often to stimulate the first whim; and, when I stretched my hand out cordially, such bloom and light and bliss rose to your young, wistful features, I had much ado often to avoid straining you then and there to my heart."

"Don't talk any more of those days, sir," I interrupted, furtively dashing away some tears from my eyes; his language was torture to me; for I knew what I must do—and do soon—and all these reminiscences, and these revelations of his feelings only made my work more difficult.

"No, Jane," he returned: "what necessity is there to dwell on the Past, when the Present is so much surer—the Future so much brighter?"

I shuddered to hear the infatuated assertion.

"You see now how the case stands—do you not?" he continued. "After a youth and manhood passed half in unutterable misery and half in dreary solitude, I have for the first time found what I can truly love—I have found you. . . . I resolved to marry you. To tell me that I had already a wife is empty mockery: you know now that

I had but a hideous demon. I was wrong to attempt to deceive you; but I feared a stubbornness that exists in your character. I feared early instilled prejudice: I wanted to have you safe before hazarding confidences. This was cowardly: I should have appealed to your nobleness and magnanimity at first, as I do now—opened to you plainly my life of agony—described to you my hunger and thirst after a higher and worthier existence—shown to you, not my resolution (that word is weak), but my resistless bent to love faithfully and well, where I am faithfully and well loved in return. Then I should have asked you to accept my pledge of fidelity, and to give me yours: Jane—give it to me now."

A pause.

"Why are you silent, Jane?"

I was experiencing an ordeal: a hand of fiery iron grasped my vitals. Terrible moment: full of struggle, blackness, burning! Not a human being that ever lived could wish to be loved better than I was loved; and him who thus loved me I absolutely worshipped: and I must renounce love and idol. One drear word comprised my intolerable duty—"Depart!"

"Jane, you understand what I want of you? Just this promise—'I will be yours, Mr. Rochester.'"

"Mr. Rochester, I will not be yours."

Another long silence.

"Jane!" recommenced he, with a gentleness that broke me down with grief, and turned me stone-cold with ominous terror—for this still voice was the pant of a lion rising—"Jane, do you mean to go one

[&]quot;I do."

[&]quot;Jane" (bending toward and embracing me), "do you mean it now?"

[&]quot;I do."

[&]quot;And now?" softly kissing my forehead and cheek.

[&]quot;I do"—extricating myself from restraint rapidly and completely.

[&]quot;Oh, Jane, this is bitter! This—this is wicked. It would not be wicked to love me."

[&]quot;It would to obey you."

A wild look raised his brows—crossed his features: he rose; but he forbore yet. I laid my hand on the back of a chair for support: I shook, I feared—but I resolved.

[&]quot;One instant, Jane. Give one glance to my horrible life when you

are gone. All happiness will be torn away with you. What then is left? For a wife I have but the maniac upstairs: as well might you refer me to some corpse in yonder churchyard. What shall I do, Jane? Where turn for a companion, and for some hope?"

"Do as I do: trust in God and yourself. Believe in heaven. Hope to meet again there."

"Then you will not yield?"

"No."

"Then you condemn me to live wretched, and to die accursed?" His voice rose.

"I advise you to live sinless: and I wish you to die tranquil."

"Then you snatch love and innocence from me? You fling me back on lust for a passion—vice for an occupation?"

"Mr. Rochester, I no more assign this fate to you than I grasp at it for myself. We were born to strive and endure—you as well as I: do so. You will forget me before I forget you."

"You make me a liar by such language: you sully my honor. I declared I could not change: you tell me to my face I shall change soon. And what a distortion in your judgment, what a perversity in your ideas, is proved by your conduct! Is it better to drive a fellow-creature to despair than to transgress a mere human law—no man being injured by the breach? for you have neither relatives nor acquaintances whom you need fear to offend by living with me. . . ."

He only looked at me. The look was far worse to resist than the frantic strain: only an idiot, however, would have succumbed now. I had dared and baffled his fury; I must elude his sorrow: I retired to the door.

"You are going, Jane?"

"I am going, sir."

"You are leaving me?"

"Yes."

"You will not come? You will not be my comforter, my rescuer? My deep love, my wild woe, my frantic prayer, are all nothing to you?"

What unutterable pathos was in his voice! How hard it was to reiterate firmly, "I am going."

"Jane!"

"Mr. Rochester!"

"Withdraw, then, I consent-but remember, you leave me here

in anguish. Go up to your own room; think over all I have said, Jane, cast a glance on my sufferings—think of me."

He turned away; he threw himself on his face on the sofa. "Oh, Jane! my hope—my love—my life!" broke in anguish from his lips. Then came a deep, strong sob.

I had already gained the door: but I walked back—walked back as determinedly as I had retreated. I knelt down by him; I turned his face from the cushion to me; I kissed his cheek; I smoothed his hair with my hand.

"God bless you, my dear master!" I said. "God keep you from harm and wrong—direct you, solace you—reward you well for your past kindness to me."

"Little Jane's love would have been my best reward," he answered: "without it, my heart is broken. But Jane will give me her love: yes—nobly, generously."

Up the blood rushed to his face; forth flashed the fire from his eyes; erect he sprang; he held his arms out; but I evaded the embrace, and at once quitted the room.

"Farewell!" was the cry of my heart as I left him. Despair added, "Farewell, for ever!"

[That night Jane dreamed she was back in the red room at Gateshead. A figure appeared to her and whispered, "My daughter, flee temptation!"]

It was yet night, but July nights are short: soon after midnight, dawn comes. "It cannot be too early to commence the task I have to fulfil," thought I. I rose. I was dressed, for I had taken off nothing but my shoes. I knew where to find in my drawers some linen, a locket, a ring. In seeking these articles, I encountered the beads of a pearl necklace Mr. Rochester had forced me to accept a few days ago. I left that; it was not mine: it was the visionary bride's, who had melted in air. The other articles I made up in a parcel; my purse, containing twenty shillings (it was all I had), I put in my pocket: I tied on my straw bonnet, pinned my shawl, took the parcel and my slippers, which I would not put on yet, and stole from my room.

"Farewell, kind Mrs. Fairfax!" I whispered, as I glided past her door. "Farewell, my darling Adèle!" I said as I glanced toward the nursery. No thought could be admitted of entering to embrace her. I had to deceive a fine ear: for aught I know, it might now be listening.

I would have got past Mr. Rochester's chamber without a pause; but my heart momentarily stopping its beat at that threshold, my foot was forced to stop also. No sleep was there: the inmate was walking restlessly from wall to wall; and again and again he sighed while I listened. There was a heaven—a temporary heaven—in this room for me, if I chose: I had but to go in and to say—

"Mr. Rochester, I will love you and live with you through life till death," and a fount of rapture would spring to my lips. I thought of this.

That kind master, who could not sleep now, was waiting with impatience for day. He would send for me in the morning; I should be gone. He would have me sought for: vainly. He would feel himself forsaken; his love rejected: he would suffer; perhaps grow desperate. I thought of this too. My hand moved toward the lock. I caught it back, and glided on.

Drearily I wound my way downstairs: I knew what I had to do, and I did it mechanically. I sought the key of the side door in the kitchen; I sought, too, a phial of oil and a feather; I oiled the key and the lock. I got some water, I got some bread: for perhaps I should have to walk far; and my strength, sorely shaken of late, must not break down. All this I did without one sound. I opened the door, passed out, shut it softly. Dim dawn glimmered in the yard. The great gates were closed and locked; but a wicket in one of them was only latched. Through that I departed: it, too, I shut; and now I was out of Thornfield.

[Jane left the neighborhood by way of little used paths. When she reached the highway she bargained with the driver of a passing coach to take her to a place where Mr. Rochester had no connections.]

CHAPTER 28

Two DAYS ARE PASSED. It is a summer evening; the coachman has set me down at a place called Whitcross; he could take me no farther for the sum I had given, and I was not possessed of another shilling in the world. The coach is a mile off by this time; I am alone. At this moment I discover that I forgot to take my parcel out of the

pocket of the coach, where I had placed it for safety; there it remains, there it must remain; and now, I am absolutely destitute.

Whitcross is no town, nor even a hamlet; it is but a stone pillar set

Whitcross is no town, nor even a hamlet; it is but a stone pillar set up where four roads meet: white-washed, I suppose to be more obvious at a distance and in darkness. Four arms spring from its summit: the nearest town to which these point is, according to the inscription, distant ten miles; the farthest, above twenty. From the well known names of these towns I learn in what county I have lighted; a north-midland shire, dusk with moorland, ridged with mountain: this I see. There are great moors behind and on each hand of me; there are waves of mountains far beyond that deep valley at my feet. The population here must be thin, and I see no passengers on these roads: they stretch out east, west, north, and south—white, broad, lonely; they are all cut in the moor, and the heather grows deep and wild to their very verge. Yet a chance traveler might pass by; and I wish no eye to see me now; strangers would wonder what I am doing, lingering here at the sign-post, evidently objectless and lost. I might be questioned: I could give no answer but what would sound incredible, and excite suspicion. Not a tie holds me to human society at this moment—not a charm or hope calls me where my fellow-creatures are—none that saw me would have a kind thought or good wish for me. I have no relative but the universal mother, Nature: I will seek her breast and ask repose.

I struck straight into the heath; I held on to a hollow I saw deeply furrowing the brown moorside; I waded knee-deep in its dark growth;

I struck straight into the heath; I held on to a hollow I saw deeply furrowing the brown moorside; I waded knee-deep in its dark growth; I turned with its turnings, and finding a moss-blackened granite crag in a hidden angle, I sat down under it. High banks of moor were about me; the crag protected my head: the sky was over that. . . . Tonight, at least . . . my mother would lodge me without money and without price. . . .

I had one morsel of bread yet: the remnant of a roll I had bought in a town we passed through at noon with a stray penny—my last coin. I saw ripe billberries gleaming here and there, like jet beads in the heath: I gathered a handful and ate them with the bread. My hunger, sharp before, was, if not satisfied, appeased by this hermit's meal. I said my evening prayers at its conclusion, and then chose my couch.

Beside the crag, the heath was very deep: when I lay down my feet were buried in it; rising high on each side, it left only a narrow space for the night-air to invade. I folded my shawl double, and

spread it over me for a coverlet; a low, mossy swell was my pillow. Thus lodged, I was not, at least at the commencement of the night, cold.

My rest might have been blissful enough, only a sad heart broke it. It plained of its gaping wounds, its inward bleeding, its riven chords. It trembled for Mr. Rochester and his doom: it bemoaned him with bitter pity; it demanded him with ceaseless longing: and, impotent as a bird with both wings broken, it still quivered its shattered pinions in vain attempts to seek him.

[Jane was on the road early the next morning and by walking steadily she reached Whitcross village about two o'clock. Faint with hunger, she approached a pastry shop with the idea of trading her silk handkerchief for bread.]

I entered the shop: a woman was there. Seeing a respectably-dressed person, a lady as she supposed, she came forward with civility. How could she serve me? I was seized with shame: my tongue would not utter the request I had prepared. I dared not offer her the creased handkerchief: besides, I felt it would be absurd. I only begged permission to sit down a moment, as I was tired. Disappointed in the expectation of a customer, she coolly acceded to my request. She pointed to a seat; I sank into it. I felt sorely urged to weep; but conscious how unseasonable such a manifestation would be, I restrained it. Soon I asked her, if there were any dressmaker or plain-work-woman in the village?

"Yes; two or three. Quite as many as there was employment for." I reflected. I was driven to the point now. I was brought face to face with Necessity. I stood in the position of one without a resource: without a friend; without a coin. I must do something. What? I must apply somewhere. Where?

"Did she know of any place in the neighborhood where a servant was wanted?"

"Nay; she couldn't say."

"What was the chief trade in this place? What did most of the people do?"

"Some were farm laborers; a good deal worked at Mr. Oliver's needle factory, and at the foundry."

"Did Mr. Oliver employ women?"

"Nay; it was men's work."

"And what do the women do?"

"I knawn't," was the answer. "Some does one thing, and some another. Poor folk mun get on as they can."

She seemed to be tired of my questions: and, indeed, what claim had I to importune her? A neighbor or two came in; my chair was evidently wanted. I took leave.

I passed up the street, looking as I went at all the houses to the right hand and to the left: but I could discover no pretext, nor see an inducement, to enter any. I rambled round the hamlet, going sometimes to a little distance and returning again, for an hour or more. Much exhausted, and suffering greatly now for want of food, I turned aside into a lane and sat down under the hedge. Ere many minutes had elapsed, I was again on my feet, however, and again searching something—a resource, or at least an informant. A pretty little house stood at the top of the lane, with a garden before it, exquisitely neat, and brilliantly blooming. I stopped at it. What business had I to approach the white door, or touch the glittering knocker? In what way could it possibly be the interest of the inhabitants of that dwelling to serve me? Yet I drew near and knocked. A mild-looking, cleanlyattired young woman opened the door. In such a voice as might be expected from a hopeless heart and fainting frame-a voice wretchedly low and faltering—I asked if a servant was wanted here?

"No," said she; "we do not keep a servant."

"Can you tell me where I could get employment of any kind?" I continued. "I am a stranger, without acquaintance, in this place. I want some work: no matter what."

But it was not her business to think for me, or to seek a place for me: besides, in her eyes, how doubtful must have appeared my character, position, tale. She shook her head, she "was sorry she could give me no information," and the white door closed, quite gently and civilly: but it shut me out. If she had held it open a little longer, I believe I should have begged a piece of bread; for I was now brought low.

I could not bear to return to the sordid village; where, besides, no prospect of aid was visible. I should have longed rather to deviate to a wood I saw not far off, which appeared in its thick shade to offer inviting shelter; but I was so sick, so weak, so gnawed with nature's cravings, instinct kept me roaming round abodes where there was a chance of food. Solitude would be no solitude—rest no rest—while the vulture, hunger, thus sank beak and talons in my side.

I drew near houses; I left them, and came back again, and again I wandered away: always repelled by the consciousness of having no claim to ask-no right to expect interest in my isolated lot. Meantime, the afternoon advanced, while I thus wandered about like a lost and starving dog. In crossing a field, I saw the church spire before me: I hastened toward it. Near the churchyard, and in the middle of a garden, stood a well-built though small house, which I had no doubt was the parsonage. I remembered that strangers who arrive at a place where they have no friends, and who want employment, sometimes apply to the clergyman for introduction and aid. It is the clergyman's function to help—at least with advice—those who wished to help themselves. I seemed to have something like a right to seek counsel here. Renewing then, my courage, and gathering my feeble remains of strength, I pushed on. I reached the house, and knocked at the kitchen-door. An old woman opened: I asked was this the parsonage?

"Yes."

"Was the clergyman in?"

"No."

"Would he be in soon?"

"No, he was gone from home."

"To a distance?"

"Not so far—happen three mile. He had been called away by the sudden death of his father: he was at Marsh End now, and would very likely stay there a fortnight longer."

"Was there any lady of the house?"

"Nay, there was naught but her, and she was housekeeper"; and of her, I could not bear to ask the relief for want of which I was sinking; I could not yet beg; and again I crawled away.

Once more I took off my handkerchief—once more I thought of the cakes of bread in the little shop. Oh, for but a crust! for but one mouthful to allay the pang of famine! Instinctively I turned my face again to the village; I found the shop again, and I went in; and though others were there besides the woman, I ventured the request: "Would she give me a roll for this handkerchief?"

She looked at me with evident suspicion: "Nay, she never sold stuff i' that way."

Almost desperate, I asked for half a cake; she again refused. "How could she tell where I had got the handkerchief," she said.

"Would she take my gloves?"

"No! what could she do with them?"

. . . I blamed none of those who repulsed me. I felt it was what was to be expected, and what could not be helped: an ordinary beggar is frequently an object of suspicion; a well-dressed beggar inevitably so. To be sure what I begged was employment: but whose business was it to provide me with employment? Not, certainly, that of persons who saw me then for the first time, and who knew nothing about my character. And as to the woman who would not take my handkerchief in exchange for her bread, why, she was right; if the offer appeared to her sinister, or the exchange unprofitable. Let me condense now. I am sick of the subject.

A little before dark I passed a farmhouse, at the open door of which the farmer was sitting, eating his supper of bread and cheese; I stopped, and said:

"Will you give me a piece of bread? for I am very hungry." He cast on me a glance of surprise; but without answering, he cut a thick slice from his loaf, and gave it to me. I imagine he did not think I was a beggar, but only an eccentric sort of lady, who had taken a fancy to his brown loaf. As soon as I was out of sight of his house, I sat down and ate it.

I could not hope to get a lodging under a roof, and sought it in the wood I have before alluded to. But my night was wretched, my rest broken: the ground was damp, the air cold: besides, intruders passed near me more than once, and I had again and again to change my quarters: no sense of safety or tranquillity befriended me. Toward morning it rained; the whole of the following day was wet. . . .

As before, I sought work; as before, I was repulsed; as before, I starved; but once did food pass my lips. At the door of a cottage I saw a little girl about to throw a mess of cold porridge into a pig trough. "Will you give me that?" I asked.

She stared at me. "Mother!" she exclaimed; "there is a woman wants me to give her this porridge."

"Well, lass," replied a voice within, "give it her if she's a beggar. T' pig doesn't want it."

The girl emptied the stiffened mold into my hand, and I devoured it ravenously.

As the wet twilight deepened, I stopped in a solitary bridle-path, which I had been pursuing an hour or more.

My glazed eye wandered over the dim and misty landscape. I saw I had strayed far from the village: it was quite out of sight. The very

cultivation surrounding it had disappeared. I had, by crossways and bypaths, once more drawn near the tract of moorland; and now, only a few fields, almost as wild and unproductive as the heath from which they were scarcely reclaimed, lay between me and the dusky hill.

"Well, I would rather die yonder than in a street, or on a frequented road," I reflected. "And far better that crows and ravens—if any ravens there be in these regions—should pick my flesh from my bones, than that they should be prisoned in a workhouse coffin and molder in a pauper's grave."

To the hill, then, I turned. I reached it. It remained now only to find a hollow where I could lie down, and feel at least hidden, if not secure: but all the surface of the waste looked level. It showed no variation but of tint: green, where rush and moss overgrew the marshes; black, where the dry soil bore only heath. Dark as it was getting, I could still see these changes: though but as mere alterations of light and shade: for color had faded with the daylight.

My eye still roved over the sullen swell, and along the moor-edge, vanishing amid the wildest scenery; when at one dim point, far in among the marshes and the ridges, a light sprang up.

[It required all her determination to traverse the rough, rain-washed country that lay between her and the faint light. When Jane managed to come close, the light proved to come from a little house, through a window of which she could see two young ladies in mourning dress, and an old country woman they called Hannah. Desolate and desperate, Jane rapped on the door. The old woman opened it.]

"What do you want?" she inquired, in a voice of surprise, as she surveyed me by the light of the candle she held.

"May I speak to your mistresses?" I said.

"You had better tell me what you have to say to them. Where do you come from?"

"I am a stranger."

"What is your business here at this hour?"

"I want a night's shelter in an out-house or anywhere, and a morsel of bread to eat."

Distrust, the very feeling I dreaded, appeared in Hannah's face. "I'll give you a piece of bread," she said, after a pause; "but we can't take in a vagrant to lodge. It isn't likely."

"Do let me speak to your mistresses."

"No; not I. What can they do for you? You should not be roving about now; it looks very ill."

"But where shall I go if you drive me away? What shall I do?"

"Oh, I'll warrant you know where to go, and what to do. Mind you don't do wrong, that's all. Here is a penny; now go—"

"A penny cannot feed me, and I have no strength to go farther. Don't shut the door—oh, don't, for God's sake!"

"I must; the rain is driving in-"

"Tell the young ladies. Let me see them-"

"Indeed, I will not. You are not what you ought to be, or you wouldn't make such a noise. Move off."

"But I must die if I am turned away."

"Not you. I'm fear'd you have some ill plans agate, that bring you about folk's houses at this time o' night. If you've any followers—housebreakers or such like—anywhere near, you may tell them we are not by ourselves in the house; we have a gentleman, and dogs, and guns." Here the honest but inflexible servant clapped the door to and bolted it within.

This was the climax. A pang of exquisite suffering—a throe of true despair—rent and heaved my heart. Worn out, indeed, I was; not another step could I stir. I sank on the wet doorstep. I groaned—I wrung my hands—I wept in utter anguish. Oh, this specter of death! Oh, this last hour, approaching in such horror! Alas, this isolation—this banishment from my kind! Not only the anchor of home, but the footing of fortitude was gone—at least for a moment; but the last I soon endeavored to regain.

"I can but die," I said, "and I believe in God. Let me try to wait His will in silence."

These words I not only thought, but uttered; and thrusting back all my misery into my heart, I made an effort to compel it to remain there—dumb and still.

"All men must die," said a voice quite close at hand, "but all are not condemned to meet a lingering and premature doom, such as yours would be if you perished here of want."

"Who or what speaks?" I asked, terrified at the unexpected sound, and incapable now of deriving from any occurrence a hope of aid. A form was near—what form, the pitch-dark night and my enfeebled vision prevented me from distinguishing. With a loud long knock, the new comer appealed to the door.

"Is it you, Mr. St. John?" cried Hannah.

"Yes—yes; open quickly."

"Well, how wet and cold you must be, such a wild night as it is! Come in—your sisters are quite uneasy about you, and I believe there are bad folks about. There has been a beggar-woman—I declare she is not gone yet!—laid down there. Get up! for shame! Move off, I say!"

"Hush, Hannah! I have a word to say to the woman. You have done your duty in excluding, now let me do mine in admitting her. I was near, and listened to both you and her. I think this is a peculiar case—I must at least examine into it. Young woman, rise, and pass before me into the house."

With difficulty I obeyed him. Presently I stood within that clean, bright kitchen—on the very hearth—trembling, sickening; conscious of an aspect in the last degree ghastly, wild, and weather-beaten. The two ladies, their brother, Mr. St. John, the old servant, were all gazing at me.

"St. John, who is it?" I heard one ask.

"I cannot tell: I found her at the door," was the reply.

"She does look white," said Hannah.

"As white as clay or death," was responded. "She will fall: let her sit."

And indeed my head swam: I dropped; but a chair received me. I still possessed my senses; though just now I could not speak.

"Perhaps a little water would restore her. Hannah, fetch some. But she is worn to nothing. How very thin, and how very bloodless!"

"A mere specter!"

"Is she ill, or only famished?"

"Famished, I think. Hannah, is that milk? Give it to me, and a piece of bread."

Diana (I knew her by the long curls which I saw drooping between me and the fire as she bent over me) broke some bread, dipped it in milk, and put it to my lips. Her face was near mine: I saw there was pity in it, and I felt sympathy in her hurried breathing. In her simple words, too, the same balm-like emotion spoke: "Try to eat."

"Yes—try," repeated Mary gently; and Mary's hand removed my sodden bonnet and lifted my head. I tasted what they offered me: feebly at first, eagerly soon.

"Not too much at first—restrain her," said the brother; "she has had enough." And he withdrew the cup of milk and the plate of bread.

"A little more, St. John-look at the avidity in her eyes."

"No more at present, sister. Try if she can speak now—ask her her name."

I felt I could speak, and I answered—"My name is Jane Elliott." Anxious as ever to avoid discovery, I had before resolved to assume an alias.

"And where do you live? Where are your friends?"

I was silent.

"Can we send for anyone you know?"

I shook my head.

"What account can you give of yourself?"

Somehow, now that I had once crossed the threshold of this house, and once was brought face to face with its owners, I felt no longer outcast, vagrant, and disowned by the wide world. I dared to put off the mendicant—to resume my natural manner and character. I began once more to know myself; and when Mr. St. John demanded an account—which at present I was far too weak to render—I said after a brief pause,

"Sir, I can give you no details tonight."

"But what, then," said he, "do you expect me to do for you?"

"Nothing," I replied. My strength sufficed for but short answers. Diana took the word:

"Do you mean," she asked, "that we have now given you what aid you require? and that we may dismiss you to the moor and the rainy night?"

I looked at her. She had, I thought, a remarkable countenance; instinct both with power and goodness. I took sudden courage. Answering her compassionate gaze with a smile, I said: "I will trust you. If I were a masterless and stray dog, I know that you would not turn me from your hearth tonight: as it is, I really have no fear. Do with me and for me as you like; but excuse me from much discourse—my breath is short—I feel a spasm when I speak." All three surveyed me, and all three were silent.

"Hannah," said Mr. St. John, at last, "let her sit there at present, and ask her no questions; in ten minutes more, give her the remainder of that milk and bread. Mary and Diana, let us go into the parlor and talk the matter over."

They withdrew. Very soon one of the ladies returned—I could not tell which. A kind of pleasant stupor was stealing over me as I sat by the genial fire. In an under tone she gave some directions to Hannah.

Ere long, with the servant's aid, I contrived to mount a staircase; my dripping clothes were removed; soon, a warm, dry bed received me. I thanked God—experienced amid unutterable exhaustion a glow of grateful joy—and slept.

CHAPTER 29

The recollection of about three days and nights succeeding this is very dim in my mind. I can recall some sensations felt in the interval; but few thoughts framed, and no actions performed. I knew I was in a small room; and in a narrow bed. To that bed I seemed to have grown; I lay on it motionless as a stone; and to have torn me from it would have been almost to kill me. I took no note of the lapse of time—of the change from morning to noon, from noon to evening. I observed when any one entered or left the apartment; I could even tell who they were; I could understand what was said when the speaker stood near to me; but I could not answer; to open my lips or move my limbs was equally impossible. Hannah, the servant, was my most frequent visitor. Her coming disturbed me. I had a feeling that she wished me away: that she did not understand me or my circumstances: that she was prejudiced against me. Diana and Mary appeared in the chamber once or twice a day. They would whisper sentences of this sort at my bedside:

"It is very well we took her in."

"Yes; she would certainly have been found dead at the door in the morning, had she been left out all night. I wonder what she has gone through?"

"Strange hardships, I imagine—poor, emaciated, pallid wanderer!"

"She is not an uneducated person, I should think, by her manner of speaking; her accent was quite pure; and the clothes she took off, though splashed and wet, were little worn and fine."

"She has a peculiar face; fleshless and haggard as it is, I rather like it; and when in good health and animated, I can fancy her physiognomy would be agreeable."

Never once in their dialogues did I hear a syllable of regret at the hospitality they had extended to me; or of suspicion of, or aversion to, myself. I was comforted.

Mr. St. John came but once. He looked at me, and said my state

of lethargy was the result of reaction from excessive and protracted fatigue. He pronounced it needless to send for a doctor: nature, he was sure, would manage best, left to herself. He said every nerve had been overstrained in some way, and the whole system must sleep torpid a while. There was no disease. He imagined my recovery would be rapid enough when once commenced. These opinions he delivered in a few words, in a quiet, low voice; and added, after a pause, in the tone of a man little accustomed to expansive comment, "rather an unusual physiognomy; certainly, not indicative of vulgarity or degradation."

"Far otherwise," responded Diana. "To speak truth, St. John, my heart rather warms to the poor little soul. I wish we may be able to benefit her permanently."

"That is hardly likely," was the reply. "You will find she is some young lady who has had a misunderstanding with her friends and has probably injudiciously left them. We may, perhaps, succeed in restoring her to them, if she is not obstinate: but I trace lines of force in her face which make me skeptical of her tractability." He stood considering me some minutes; then added, "She looks sensible, but not at all handsome."

"She is so ill, St. John."

"Ill or well, she would always be plain. The grace and harmony of beauty are quite wanting in those features."

On the third day, I was better; on the fourth, I could speak, move, rise in bed, and turn. Hannah had brought me some gruel and dry toast, about, as I supposed, the dinner hour. I had eaten with relish: the food was good—void of the feverish flavor which had hitherto poisoned what I had swallowed. When she left me, I felt comparatively strong and revived: ere long satiety of repose, and desire for action stirred me. I wished to rise; but what could I put on? Only my damp and bemired apparel; in which I had slept on the ground and fallen in the marsh. I felt ashamed to appear before my benefactors so clad. I was spared the humiliation.

On a chair by the bedside were all my own things, clean and dry. My black silk frock hung against the wall. The traces of the bog were removed from it; the creases left by the wet smoothed out: it was quite decent. My very shoes and stockings were purified and rendered presentable. There were the means of washing in the room, and a comb and brush to smooth my hair. After a weary process, and resting every five minutes, I succeeded in dressing myself. My clothes hung

loose on me; for I was much wasted, but I covered deficiencies with a shawl, and once more, clean and respectable-looking—no speck of dirt, no trace of the disorder I so hated, and which seemed so to degrade me, left—I crept down a stone staircase with the aid of the banisters, to a narrow low passage, and found my way presently to the kitchen.

It was full of the fragrance of new bread, and the warmth of a generous fire. Hannah was baking. . . . She had been cold and stiff, indeed, at the first: latterly she had begun to relent a little; and when she saw me come in tidy and well-dressed, she even smiled.

"What, you have got up?" she said. "You are better, then. You may sit you down in my chair on the hearthstone, if you will."

She pointed to the rocking chair: I took it. She bustled about, examining me every now and then with the corner of her eye. Turning to me, as she took some loaves from the oven, she asked, bluntly—

"Did you ever go a-begging afore you came here?"

I was indignant for a moment; but remembering that anger was out of the question, and that I had indeed appeared as a beggar to her, I answered quietly; but still not without a certain marked firmness—

"You are mistaken in supposing me a beggar. I am no beggar; any more than yourself or your young ladies."

After a pause, she said, "I dunnut understand that: you've like no house, nor no brass, I guess?"

"The want of house or brass (by which I suppose you mean money) does not make a beggar in your sense of the word."

"Are you book-learned?" she inquired presently.

"Yes, very."

"But you've never been to a boarding-school!"

"I was at boarding-school eight years."

She opened her eyes wide. "Whatever cannot ye keep yourself for, then?"

"I have kept myself; and, I trust, shall keep myself again. What are you going to do with these gooseberries?" I inquired, as she brought out a basket of the fruit.

"Mak'em into pies."

"Give them to me and I'll pick them."

"Nay; I dunnt want ye to do nought."

"But I must do something. Let me have them."

She consented; and she even brought me a clean towel to spread over my dress, "lest," as she said, I "should mucky it."

"Ye've not been used to sarvant's wark, I see by your hands," she remarked. "Happen ye've been a dressmaker."

"No, you are wrong. And, now, never mind what I have been: don't trouble your head further about me; but tell me the name of the house where we are."

"Some calls it Marsh End, and some calls it Moor House."

"And the gentleman who lives here is called Mr. St. John?"

"Nay; he doesn't live here: he is only staying a while. When he is at home, he is in his own parish at Morton."

"That village a few miles off?"

"Aye."

"And what is he?"

"He is a parson."

I remembered the answer of the old housekeeper at the parsonage, when I had asked to see the clergyman. "This, then, was his father's residence?"

"Aye; old Mr. Rivers lived here, and his father, and grandfather, and gurt (great) grandfather afore him."

"The name, then, of that gentleman, is Mr. St. John Rivers?"

"Aye; St. John is like his kirstened name."

"And his sisters are called Diana and Mary Rivers?"

"Yes."

"Their father is dead?"

"Dead three weeks sin' of a stroke."

"They have no mother?"

"The mistress has been dead this mony a year."

"Have you lived with the family long?"

"I've lived here thirty year. I nursed them all three."

"That proves you must have been an honest and faithful servant. I will say so much for you, though you have had the incivility to call me a beggar."

She again regarded me with a surprised stare. "I believe," she said, "I was quite mista'en in my thoughts of you: but there is so mony cheats goes about, you mun forgie me."

"And though," I continued, rather severely, "you wished to turn me from the door, on a night when you should not have shut out a dog."

"Well, it was hard: but what can a body do? I thought more o' th' childer nor of mysel: poor things! They've like nobody to tak' care on 'em but me. I'm like to look sharpish."

I maintained a grave silence for some minutes.

"You munnut think too hardly of me," she again remarked.

"But I do think hardly of you," I said; "and I'll tell you why—not so much because you refused to give me shelter, or regarded me as an impostor, as because you just now made it a species of reproach that I had no 'brass,' and no house. Some of the best people that ever lived have been as destitute as I am; and if you are a Christian, you ought not to consider poverty a crime."

"No more I ought," said she: "Mr. St. John tells me so too; and I see I wor wrang—but I've clear a different notion on you now to what I had. You look a raight down dacent little crater."

"That will do—I forgive you now. Shake hands."

She put her floury and horny hand into mine; another and heartier smile illumined her rough face; and from that moment we were friends.

Hannah was evidently fond of talking. While I picked the fruit, and she made the paste for the pies, she proceeded to give me sundry details about her deceased master and mistress, and "the childer," as she called the young people.

Old Mr. Rivers, she said, was a plain man enough; but a gentleman, and of as ancient a family as could be found. Marsh End had belonged to the Riverses ever since it was a house: and it was, she affirmed, "aboon two hundred year old—for all it looked but a small, humble place, naught to compare wi' Mr. Oliver's grand hall down i' Morton Vale. But she could remember Bill Oliver's father a journeyman needle-maker; and th' Rivers wor gentry i' th' owd days o' th' Henrys, as onybody might see by looking into th' registers i' Morton Church vestry." Still, she allowed, "the owd maister was like other folk—naugh mich out o' t' common way: stark mad o' shooting, and farming, and sich like." The mistress was different. She was a great reader, and studied a deal; and the "bairns" had taken after her. There was nothing like them in these parts, nor ever had been; they had liked learning, all three, almost from the time they could speak; and they had always been "of a mak' of their own." Mr. St. John, when he grew up, would go to college and be a parson; and the girls, as soon as they left school, would seek places as governesses: for they had told her their father had some years ago lost a great deal of money, by a man he had trusted turning bankrupt; and as he was now not rich enough to give them fortunes, they must provide for themselves. They had lived very little at home for a long while, and were

only come now to stay a few weeks on account of their father's death: but they did so like Marsh End and Morton, and all these moors and hills about. They had been in London, and many other grand towns; but they always said there was no place like home; and then they were so agreeable with each other—never fell out nor "threaped." She did not know where there was such a family for being united.

Having finished my task of gooseberry picking, I asked where the two ladies and their brother were now.

"Gone over to Morton for a walk; but they would be back in half an hour to tea."

They returned within the time Hannah had allotted them: they entered by the kitchen door. Mr. St. John, when he saw me, merely bowed and passed through; the two ladies stopped: Mary, in a few words, kindly and calmly expressed the pleasure she felt in seeing me well enough to be able to come down; Diana took my hand: she shook her head at me.

"You should have waited for my leave to descend," she said. "You still look very pale—and so thin! Poor child!—poor girl!"

Diana had a voice toned, to my ear, like the cooing of a dove. She possessed eyes whose gaze I delighted to encounter. Her whole face seemed to me full of charm. Mary's countenance was equally intelligent—her features equally pretty: but her expression was more reserved; and her manners, though gentle, more distant. Diana looked and spoke with a certain authority: she had a will, evidently. It was my nature to feel pleasure in yielding to authority supported like hers; and to bend, where my conscience and self-respect permitted, to an active will.

"And what business have you here?" she continued. "It is not your place. Mary and I sit in the kitchen sometimes, because at home we like to be free, even to license—but you are a visitor, and must go into the parlor."

"I am very well here."

"Not at all—with Hannah bustling about and covering you with flour."

"Besides, the fire is too hot for you," interposed Mary.

"To be sure," added her sister. "Come, you must be obedient." And still holding my hand she made me rise, and led me into the inner room.

"Sit there," she said, placing me on the sofa, "while we take our things off and get the tea ready; it is another privilege we exercise in our little moorland home—to prepare our own meals when we are so inclined; or when Hannah is baking, brewing, washing, or ironing."

She closed the door, leaving me solus with Mr. St. John, who sat opposite; a book or newspaper in his hand. I examined, first, the parlor, and then its occupant.

The parlor was rather a small room, very plainly furnished; yet comfortable, because clean and neat. The old-fashioned chairs were very bright, and the walnut-wood table was like a looking glass. A few strange, antique portraits of the men and women of other days decorated the stained walls; a cupboard with glass doors contained some books and an ancient set of china. There was no superfluous ornament in the room—not one modern piece of furniture, save a brace of work-boxes and a lady's desk in rosewood, which stood on a side-table: everything—including the carpet and curtains—looked at once well worn and well saved.

Mr. St. John-sitting as still as one of the dusky pictures on the walls; keeping his eyes fixed on the page he perused and his lip mutely sealed—was easy enough to examine. Had he been a statue instead of a man, he could not have been easier. He was youngperhaps from twenty-eight to thirty-tall, slender; his face riveted the eye; it was like a Greek face, very pure in outline: quite a straight, classic nose; quite an Athenian mouth and chin. It is seldom, indeed, an English face comes so near the antique models as did his. He might well be a little shocked at the irregularity of my lineaments, his own being so harmonious. His eyes were large and blue, with brown lashes; his high forehead, colorless as ivory, was partially streaked over by careless locks of fair hair. . . . Quiescent as he now sat, there was something about his nostril, his mouth, his brow, which, to my perceptions, indicated elements within either restless, or hard, or eager. He did not speak to me one word nor even direct to me one glance, till his sisters returned. Diana, as she passed in and out, in the course of preparing tea, brought me a little cake, baked on top of the oven.

"Eat that now," she said: "you must be hungry. Hannah says you have had nothing but some gruel since breakfast."

I did not refuse it, for my appetite was awakened and keen. Mr. Rivers now closed his book, approached the table, and, as he took a seat, fixed his blue pictorial-looking eyes full on me. There was an unceremonious directness, a searching, decided steadfastness in his

gaze now, which told that intention, and not diffidence, had hitherto kept it averted from the stranger.

"You are very hungry," he said.

"I am, sir." It is my way—it always was my way, by instinct—ever to meet the brief with brevity, the direct with plainness.

"It is well for you that a low fever has forced you to abstain for the last three days: there would have been danger in yielding to the cravings of your appetite at first. Now you may eat; though still not immoderately."

"I trust I shall not eat long at your expense, sir," was my very clumsily-contrived, unpolished answer.

"No," he said, coolly: "when you have indicated to us the residence of your friends, we can write to them, and you may be restored to home."

"That, I must plainly tell you, is out of my power to do; being absolutely without home and friends."

The three looked at me; but not distrustfully; I felt there was no suspicion in their glances: there was more of curiosity. I speak particularly of the young ladies. St. John's eyes, though clear enough in a literal sense, in a figurative one were difficult to fathom. He seemed to use them rather as instruments to search other people's thoughts, than as agents to reveal his own: the which combination of keenness and reserve was considerably more calculated to embarrass than to encourage.

"Do you mean to say," he asked, "that you are completely isolated from every connection?"

"I do. Not a tie links me to any living thing: not a claim do I possess to admittance under any roof in England."

"A most singular position at your age!"

Here I saw his glance directed to my hands, which were folded on the table before me. I wondered what he sought there: his words soon explained the quest.

"You have never been married? You are a spinster?"

Diana laughed. "Why, she can't be above seventeen or eighteen years old, St. John," she said.

"I am near nineteen: but I am not married. No."

I felt a burning glow mount to my face; for bitter and agitating recollections were awakened by the allusion to marriage. They all saw the embarrassment, and the emotion. Diana and Mary relieved

me by turning their eyes elsewhere than to my crimsoned visage; but the colder and sterner brother continued to gaze, till the trouble he had excited forced out tears as well as color.

"Where did you last reside?" he now asked.

"You are too inquisitive, St. John," murmured Mary, in a low voice; but he leaned over the table and required an answer, by a second firm and piercing look.

"The name of the place where, and of the person with whom I lived, is my secret," I replied, concisely.

"Which, if you like, you have, in my opinion, a right to keep, both from St. John and every other questioner," remarked Diana.

"Yet if I know nothing about you or your history, I cannot help you," he said. "And you need help: do you not?"

"I need it, and I seek it; so far, sir, that some true philanthropist will put me in the way of getting work which I can do, and the remuneration for which will keep me: if but in the barest necessaries of life."

"I know not whether I am a true philanthropist; yet I am willing to aid you to the utmost of my power, in a purpose so honest. First, then, tell me what you have been accustomed to do, and what you can do."

I had now swallowed my tea. I was mightily refreshed by the beverage; as much so as a giant with wine: it gave new tone to my unstrung nerves, and enabled me to address this penetrating young judge steadily.

"Mr. Rivers," I said, turning to him, and looking at him, as he looked at me, openly and without diffidence, "you and your sisters have done me a great service—the greatest man can do his fellowbeing; you have rescued me, by your noble hospitality, from death. This benefit conferred gives you an unlimited claim on my gratitude, and a claim to a certain extent, on my confidence. I will tell you as much of the history of the wanderer you have harbored, as I can tell without compromising my own peace of mind—my own security, moral and physical, and that of others.

"I am an orphan; the daughter of a clergyman. My parents died before I could know them. I was brought up a dependent; educated in a charitable institution. I will even tell you the name of the establishment, where I passed six years as a pupil, and two as a teacher—Lowood Orphan Asylum,——shire; you will have heard of it, Mr. Rivers? The Rev. Robert Brocklehurst is the treasurer."

"I have heard of Mr. Brocklehurst, and I have seen the school."

"I left Lowood nearly a year since to become a private governess. I obtained a good situation, and was happy. This place I was obliged to leave four days before I came here. The reason of my departure I cannot and ought not to explain: it would be useless—dangerous and would sound incredible. No blame attached to me: I am as free from culpability as any one of you three. Miserable I am, and must be for a time; for the catastrophe which drove me from the house I had found a paradise was of a strange and direful nature. I observed but two points in planning my departure—speed, secrecy. To secure these, I had to leave behind me everything I possessed except a small parcel, which, in my hurry and trouble of mind, I forgot to take out of the coach that brought me to Whitcross. To this neighborhood, then, I came, quite destitute. I slept two nights in the open air, and wandered about two days without crossing a threshold. But twice in that space of time did I taste food, and it was when brought by hunger, exhaustion, and despair, almost to the last gasp, that you, Mr. Rivers, forbade me to perish of want at your door, and took me under the shelter of your roof. I know all your sisters have done for me since—for I have not been insensible during my seeming torpor -and I owe to their spontaneous, genuine, genial compassion, as large a debt as to your evangelical charity."

"Don't make her talk any more now, St. John," said Diana, as I paused; "she is evidently not yet fit for excitement. Come to the sofa, and sit down now, Miss Elliott."

I gave an involuntary half-start at hearing the alias: I had forgotten my new name. Mr. Rivers, whom nothing seemed to escape, noticed it at once.

"You said your name was Jane Elliott?" he observed.

"I did say so; and it is the name by which I think it expedient to be called at present: but it is not my real name, and when I hear it, it sounds strange to me."

"Your real name you will not give?"

"No: I fear discovery above all things; and whatever disclosure would lead to it, I avoid."

"You are quite right, I am sure," said Diana. "Now do, brother, let her be at peace awhile."

But when St. John had mused a few moments, he recommenced, as imperturbably, and with as much acumen as ever.

"You would not like to be long dependent on our hospitality-

you would wish, I see, to dispense as soon as may be with my sisters' compassion; and, above all, with my charity (I am quite sensible of the distinction drawn, nor do I resent it—it is just): you desire to be independent of us?"

"I do: I have already said so. Show me how to work, or how to seek work: that is all I now ask; then let me go, if it be but to the meanest cottage—but *till then*, allow me to stay here: I dread another essay of the horrors of homeless destitution."

"Indeed, you shall stay here," said Diana, putting her white hand on my head. "You shall," repeated Mary, in the tone of undemonstrative sincerity, which seemed natural to her.

"My sisters, you see, have a pleasure in keeping you," said Mr. St. John, "as they would have a pleasure in keeping and cherishing a half-frozen bird, some wintry wind might have driven through their casement. I feel more inclination to put you in the way of keeping yourself: and shall endeavor to do so: but observe, my sphere is narrow. I am but the incumbent of a poor country parish: my aid must be of the humblest sort. And if you are inclined to despise the day of small things, seek some more efficient succor than such as I can offer."

"She has already said that she is willing to do anything honest she *can* do," answered Diana, for me; "and you know, St. John, she has no choice of helpers: she is forced to put up with such crusty people as you."

"I will be a dressmaker: I will be a plain workwoman; I will be a servant, a nurse-girl, if I can be no better," I answered.

"Right," said Mr. St. John, quite coolly. "If such is your spirit, I promise to aid you; in my own time and way."

He now resumed the book with which he had been occupied before tea. I soon withdrew; for I had talked as much, and sat up as long, as my present strength would permit.

CHAPTER 30

THE MORE I KNEW of the inmates of Moor House, the better I liked them. In a few days I had so far recovered my health that I could sit up all day, and walk out sometimes. I could join with Diana and Mary in all their occupations; converse with them as

much as they wished, and aid them when and where they would allow me. There was a reviving pleasure in this intercourse, of a kind now tasted by me for the first time—the pleasure arising from perfect congeniality of tastes, sentiments, and principles.

[Jane soon shared the sisters' enthusiasm for their sequestered home and their deep love of the wild moors. She read avidly the books they loaned her, and in return for the German lessons Diana gave her, showed the sisters what she knew of drawing. The rapidly increasing intimacy between Jane and his sisters in no way affected Mr. Rivers, however; he remained distant and uncommunicative. When Jane attended his church she found him a powerful, but a disquieting and sternly Calvinist, preacher. Jane had lived a month under his protection without mention being made of any employment for her when she approached him one morning to discuss her urgent need of work.]

Looking up as I drew near—"You have a question to ask of me?" he said.

"Yes; I wish to know whether you have heard of any service I can offer myself to undertake."

"I found or devised something for you three weeks ago; but as you seemed both useful and happy here—as my sisters had evidently become attached to you, and your society gave them unusual pleasure—I deemed it inexpedient to break in on your mutual comfort, till their approaching departure from Marsh End should render yours necessary."

"And they will go in three days now?" I said.

"Yes; and when they go, I shall return to the parsonage at Morton: Hannah will accompany me; and this old house will be shut up."

I waited a few moments, expecting he would go on with the subject first broached: but he seemed to have entered another train of reflection: his look denoted abstraction from me and my business. I was obliged to recall him to a theme which was of necessity one of close and anxious interest to me.

"What is the employment you had in view, Mr. Rivers? I hope this delay will not have increased the difficulty of securing it."

"Oh, no; since it is an employment which depends only on me to give, and you to accept."

He again paused: there seemed a reluctance to continue. I grew

impatient: a restless movement or two, and an eager and exacting glance fastened on his face, conveyed the feeling to him as effectually as words could have done, and with less trouble.

"You need be in no hurry to hear," he said; "let me frankly tell you, I have nothing eligible or profitable to suggest. Before I explain, recall, if you please, my notice, clearly given, that if I helped you, it must be as the blind man would help the lame. I am poor; for I find that, when I have paid my father's debts, all the patrimony remaining to me will be this crumbling grange, the row of scathed firs behind, and the patch of moorish soil, with the yew-trees and hollybushes in front. I am obscure; Rivers is an old name, but of the three sole descendants of the race, two earn the dependent's crust among strangers, and the third considers himself an alien from his native country-not only for life, but in death. Yes, and deems, and is bound to deem, himself honored by the lot, and aspires but after the day when the cross of separation from fleshly ties shall be laid on his shoulders, and when the Head of that church-militant of whose humblest members he is one, shall give the word, 'Rise, follow me!'"

St. John said these words as he pronounced his sermons, with a quiet, deep voice; with an unflushed cheek, and a coruscating radiance of glance. He resumed:

"And since I am myself poor and obscure, I can offer you but a service of poverty and obscurity. You may even think it degrading—for I see now your habits have been what the world calls refined: your tastes lean to the ideal; and your society has at least been among the educated—but I consider that no service degrades which can better our race. I hold that the more arid and unreclaimed the soil where the Christian laborer's task of tillage is appointed himthe scantier the meed his toil brings—the higher the honor. His, under such circumstances, is the destiny of the pioneer; and the first pioneers of the Gospel were the Apostles—their captain was Jesus, the Redeemer himself."

"Well?" I said, as he again paused—"proceed."
He looked at me before he proceeded: indeed, he seemed leisurely to read my face, as if its features and lines were characters on a page. The conclusions drawn from this scrutiny he partially expressed in his succeeding observations.

"I believe you will accept the post I offer you," said he; "and hold it for a while: not permanently, though: any more than I could permanently keep the narrow and narrowing—the tranquil, hidden

office of English country incumbent: for in your nature is an alloy as detrimental to repose as that in mine; though of a different kind."

"Do explain," I urged, when he halted once more.

"I will; and you shall hear how poor the proposal is—how trivial —how cramping. I shall not stay long at Morton, now that my father is dead, and that I am my own master. I shall leave the place probably in the course of a twelve-month: but while I do stay, I will exert myself to the utmost for its improvement. Morton, when I came to it two years ago, had no school: the children of the poor were excluded from every hope of progress. I established one for boys: I mean now to open a second school for girls. I have hired a building for the purpose, with a cottage of two rooms attached to it for the mistress's house. Her salary will be thirty pounds a year: her house is already furnished, very simply, but sufficiently, by the kindness of a lady, Miss Oliver; the only daughter of the sole rich man in my parish—Mr. Oliver, the proprietor of a needle factory and iron foundry in the valley. The same lady pays for the education and clothing of an orphan from the workhouse, on condition that she shall aid the mistress in such menial offers connected with her own house and the school, as her occupation of teaching will prevent her having time to discharge in person. Will you be this mistress?"

He put the question rather hurriedly; he seemed half to expect an

He put the question rather hurriedly; he seemed half to expect an indignant, or at least a disdainful rejection of the offer: not knowing all my thoughts and feelings, though guessing some, he could not tell in what light the lot would appear to me. In truth it was humble, but then it was sheltered, and I wanted a safe asylum; it was plodding, but then, compared with that of a governess in a rich house, it was independent; and the fear of servitude with strangers entered my soul like iron: it was not ignoble—not unworthy—not mentally degrading. I made my decision.

"I thank you for the proposal, Mr. Rivers; and I accept it with all my heart."

"But you comprehend me?" he said. "It is a village school: your scholars will be only poor girls—cottagers' children—at the best, farmers' daughters. Knitting, sewing, reading, writing, ciphering, will be all you will have to teach. What will you do with your accomplishments? What, with the largest portion of your mind—sentiments—tastes?"

[&]quot;Save them till they are wanted. They will keep."

[&]quot;You know what you undertake, then?"

"I do."

He now smiled: not a bitter or a sad smile; but one well pleased and deeply gratified.

"And when will you commence the exercise of your function?"

"I will go to my house tomorrow; and open the school, if you like, next week."

"Very well: so be it."

He rose and walked through the room. Standing still, he again looked at me. He shook his head.

"What do you disapprove of, Mr. Rivers?" I asked.

"You will not stay at Morton long: no, no!"

"Why! What is your reason for saying so?"

"I read it in your eye; it is not of that description which promises the maintenance of an even tenor in life."

"I am not ambitious."

He started at the word "ambitious." He repeated, "No. What made you think of ambition? Who is ambitious? I know I am: but how did you find it out?"

"I was speaking of myself."

"Well, if you are not ambitious, you are-" He paused.

"What?"

"I was going to say, impassioned: but perhaps you would have misunderstood the word, and been displeased. I mean that human affections and sympathies have a most powerful hold on you. I am sure you cannot long be content to pass your leisure in solitude, and to devote your working hours to a monotonous labor wholly void of stimulus; any more than I can be content," he added, with emphasis, "to live here buried in morass, pent in with mountain—my nature, that God gave me, contravened; my faculties, heaven-bestowed, paralyzed—made useless. You hear now how I contradict myself. I, who preached contentment with a humble lot, and justified the vocations even of hewers of wood, and drawers of water, in God's service—I, His ordained minister, almost rave in my restlessness. Well, propensities and principles must be reconciled by some means."

He left the room. In this brief hour I had learned more of him than in the whole previous month: yet still he puzzled me.

Diana and Mary Rivers became more sad and silent as the day approached for leaving their brother, and their home. They both tried to appear as usual; but the sorrow they had to struggle against was one that could not be entirely conquered or concealed. Diana in-

timated that this would be a different parting from any they had ever yet known. It would probably, as far as St. John was concerned, be a parting for years: it might be a parting for life.

"He will sacrifice all to his long-framed resolves," she said: "natural affection and feelings more potent still. St. John looks quiet, Jane; but he hides a fever in his vitals. You would think him gentle, yet in some things he is inexorable as death; and the worst of it is, my conscience will hardly permit me to dissuade him from his severe decision: certainly, I cannot for a moment blame him for it. It is right, noble, Christian: yet it breaks my heart." And the tears gushed to her fine eyes. Mary bent her head low over her work.

"We are now without father: we shall soon be without home and brother," she murmured.

At that moment a little accident supervened, which seemed decreed by fate, purposely to prove the truth of the adage, that "misfortunes never come singly," and to add to their distresses the vexing one of the slip between the cup and the lip. St. John passed the window reading a letter. He entered.

"Our Uncle John is dead," said he.

Both the sisters seemed struck: not shocked or appalled; the tidings appeared in their eyes rather momentous than afflicting.

"Dead?" repeated Diana.

"Yes."

She riveted a searching gaze on her brother's face. "And what then?" she demanded, in a low voice.

"What then, Die?" he replied, maintaining a marble immobility of feature. "What then? Why—nothing. Read."

He threw the letter into her lap. She glanced over it, and handed it to Mary. Mary perused it in silence, and returned it to her brother. All three looked at each other, and all three smiled—a dreary, pensive smile enough.

"Amen! We can yet live," said Diana, at last.

"At any rate, it makes us no worse off than we were before," remarked Mary.

"Only it forces rather strongly on the mind the picture of what might have been," said Mr. Rivers; "and contrasts it somewhat too vividly with what is."

He folded the letter, and locked it in his desk, and again went out. For some minutes no one spoke. Diana then turned to me.

"Jane, you will wonder at us and our mysteries," she said; "and

think us hard-hearted beings not to be more moved at the death of so near a relation as an uncle; but we have never seen him or known him. He was my mother's brother. My father and he quarreled long ago. It was by his advice that my father risked most of his property in the speculation that ruined him. Mutual recrimination passed between them: they parted in anger, and were never reconciled. My uncle engaged afterward in more prosperous undertakings: it appears he realized a fortune of twenty thousand pounds. He was never married, and had no near kindred but ourselves, and one other person, not more closely related than we. My father always cherished the idea that he would atone for his error, by leaving his possessions to us; that letter informs us that he has bequeathed every penny to the other relation; with the exception of thirty guineas, to be divided between St. John, Diana, and Mary Rivers, for the purchase of three mourning rings. He had a right, of course, to do as he pleased: and yet a momentary damp is cast on the spirits by the receipt of such news. Mary and I would have esteemed ourselves rich with a thousand pounds each; and to St. John such a sum would have been valuable, for the good it would have enabled him to do."

This explanation given, the subject was dropped, and no further reference made to it, by either Mr. Rivers or his sisters. The next day, I left Marsh End for Morton. The day after, Diana and Mary quitted it for distant B——. In a week, Mr. Rivers and Hannah repaired to the parsonage: and so the old grange was abandoned.

CHAPTER 31

MY HOME, then, when I at last find a home, is a cottage: a little room with white-washed walls, and a sanded floor; containing four painted chairs and a table, a clock, a cupboard, with two or three plates and dishes, and a set of tea-things in delft. Above, a chamber of the same dimensions as the kitchen, with a deal bed-stead, and chest of drawers; small, yet too large to be filled with my scanty wardrobe: though the kindness of my gentle and generous friends has increased that, by a modest stock of such things as are necessary.

It is evening. I have dismissed, with the fee of an orange, the little

orphan who serves me as a handmaid. I am sitting alone on the hearth. This morning, the village school opened. I had twenty scholars. But three of the number can read: none write or cipher. Several knit, and a few sew a little. They speak with the broadest accent of the district. At present, they and I have a difficulty in understanding each other's language. Some of them are unmannered, rough, intractable, as well as ignorant; but others are docile, have a wish to learn, and evince a disposition that pleases me. I must not forget that these coarsely-clad little peasants are of flesh and blood as good as the scions of gentlest genealogy; and that the germs of native excellence, refinement, intelligence, kind feeling, are as likely to exist in their hearts as in those of the best-born. My duty will be to develop these germs: surely I shall find some happiness in discharging that office. Much enjoyment I do not expect in the life opening before me: yet it will, doubtless, if I regulate my mind, and exert my powers as I ought, yield me enough to live on from day to day.

Was I very gleeful, settled, content, during the hours I passed in yonder bare, humble school-room this morning and afternoon? Not to deceive myself, I must reply—No: I felt desolate to a degree. I felt —yes, idiot that I am—I felt degraded. I doubted I had taken a step which sank instead of raising me in the scale of social existence. I was weakly dismayed at the ignorance, the poverty, the coarseness of all I heard and saw round me. But let me not hate and despise myself too much for these feelings: I know them to be wrong—that is a great step gained; I shall strive to overcome them. Tomorrow, I trust, I shall get the better of them partially; and in a few weeks, perhaps, they will be quite subdued. In a few months, it is possible, the happiness of seeing progress, and a change for the better in my scholars, may substitute gratification for disgust.

Meantime, let me ask myself one question—Which is better? To have surrendered to temptation; listened to passion; made no painful effort—no struggle—but to have sunk down in the silken snare; fallen asleep on the flowers covering it; wakened in a southern clime, among the luxuries of a pleasure villa: to have been now living in France, Mr. Rochester's mistress; delirious with his love half my time—for he would—oh, yes, he would have loved me well for a while. He did love me—no one will ever love me so again. I shall never more know the sweet homage given to beauty, youth, and grace—for never to any one else shall I seem to possess these charms. He was fond and proud of me—it is what no man besides will ever be.—

But where am I wandering, and what am I saying; and, above all, feeling? Whether is it better, I ask, to be a slave in a fool's paradise at Marseilles—fevered with delusive bliss one hour—suffocating with the bitterest tears of remorse and shame the next—or to be a village-schoolmistress, free and honest, in a breezy mountain nook in the healthy heart of England?

Yes; I feel now that I was right when I adhered to principle and law, and scorned and crushed the insane promptings of a frenzied moment. God directed me to a correct choice: I thank His providence for the guidance!

Having brought my eventide musings to this point, I rose, went to my door, and looked at the sunset of the harvest day. . . . I thought myself happy, and was surprised to find myself ere long weeping . . . for him I was no more to see. . . . I hid my eyes, and leaned my head against the stone frame of my door; but soon a slight noise near the wicket which shut in my tiny garden from the meadow beyond it, made me look up. A dog—old Carlo, Mr. Rivers' pointer, as I saw in a moment—was pushing the gate with his nose, and St. John himself leaned upon it with folded arms; his brow knit, his gaze, grave almost to displeasure, fixed on me. I asked him to come in.

"No, I cannot stay; I have only brought you a little parcel my sisters left for you. I think it contains a color-box, pencils, and paper."

I approached to take it: a welcome gift it was. He examined my face, I thought, with austerity, as I came near: the traces of tears were doubtless very visible upon it.

"Have you found your first day's work harder than you expected?" he asked.

"Oh, no! On the contrary, I think in time I shall get on with my scholars very well."

"But perhaps your accommodations—your cottage—your furniture—have disappointed your expectations? They are, in truth, scanty enough; but—" I interrupted:

"My cottage is clean and weather-proof; my furniture sufficient and commodious. All I see has made me thankful, not despondent. I am not absolutely such a fool and sensualist as to regret the absence of a carpet, a sofa, and silver plate: besides, five weeks ago I had nothing—I was an outcast, a beggar, a vagrant; now I have acquaintance, a home, a business. I wonder at the goodness of God; the generosity of my friends; the bounty of my lot. I do not repine."

"But you feel solitude an oppression? The little house there behind you is dark and empty."

"I have hardly had time yet to enjoy a sense of tranquillity, much less to grow impatient under one of loneliness."

[For some minutes the two stood talking, their backs toward the gate. Jane learned that St. John Rivers had determined to become a missionary. Both started when a voice as sweet as a silver bell spoke behind them. Jane quickly, and Rivers with studied deliberation, turned to face a graceful girl clad in pure white.]

The young girl had regular and delicate lineaments; eyes shaped and colored as we see them in lovely pictures, large, and dark, and full; the long and shadowy eyelash which encircles a fine eye with so soft a fascination; the penciled brow which gives such clearness; the white, smooth forehead, which adds such repose to the livelier beauties of tint and ray; the cheek, oval, fresh and smooth; the lips, fresh too, ruddy, healthy, sweetly formed; the even and gleaming teeth without flaw; the small dimpled chin; the ornament of rich, plenteous tresses—all advantages, in short, which, combined, realize the ideal of beauty, were fully hers. I wondered, as I looked at this fair creature: I admired her with my whole heart. Nature had surely formed her in a partial mood; and, forgetting her usual stinted step-mother dole of gifts, had endowed this, her darling, with a granddame's bounty.

What did St. John Rivers think of this earthly angel? I naturally asked myself that question as I saw him turn to her and look at her; and, as naturally, I sought the answer to the inquiry in his countenance. He had already withdrawn his eye from the Peri, and was looking at a humble tuft of daisies which grew by the wicket.

"A lovely evening, but late for you to be out alone," he said, as he crushed the snowy heads of the closed flowers with his foot.

"Oh, I only came home from S——" (she mentioned the name of a large town some twenty miles distant) "this afternoon. Papa told me you had opened your school, and that the new mistress was come; and so I put on my bonnet after tea, and ran up the valley to see her: this is she?" pointing to me.

"It is," said St. John.

"Do you think you shall like Morton?" she asked of me, with a direct and naïve simplicity of tone and manner, pleasing, if child-like.

- "I hope I shall. I have many inducements to do so."
- "Did you find your scholars as attentive as you expected?"
- "Quite."
- "Do you like your house?"
- "Very much."
- "Have I furnished it nicely?"
- "Very nicely, indeed."
- "And made a good choice of an attendant for you in Alice Wood?"

"You have, indeed. She is teachable and handy." (This then, I thought, is Miss Oliver, the heiress; favored, it seems, in the gifts of fortune, as well as in those of nature! What happy combination of the planets presided over her birth, I wonder?)

"I shall come up and help you to teach sometimes," she added. "It will be a change for me to visit you now and then; and I like a change. Mr. Rivers, I have been so gay during my stay at S——. Last night, or rather this morning, I was dancing till two o'clock. The ——th regiment are stationed there since the riots; and the officers are the most agreeable men in the world: they put all our young knife-grinders and scissor merchants to shame."

It seemed to me that Mr. St. John's under lip protruded, and his upper lip curled a moment. His mouth certainly looked a good deal compressed, and the lower part of his face unusually stern and square, as the laughing girl gave him this information. He lifted his gaze, too, from the daisies, and turned it on her. An unsmiling, a searching, a meaning gaze it was. She answered it with a second laugh, and laughter well became her youth, her roses, her dimples, her bright eyes.

As he stood, mute and grave, she again fell to caressing Carlo. "Poor Carlo loves me," said she. "He is not stern and distant to his friends; and if he could speak, he would not be silent."

As she patted the dog's head, bending with native grace before his young and austere master, I saw a glow rise to that master's face. I saw his solemn eye melt with sudden fire, and flicker with resistless emotion. Flushed and kindled thus, he looked nearly as beautiful for a man as she for a woman. His chest heaved once, as if his large heart, weary of despotic constriction, had expanded, despite the will, and made a vigorous bound for the attainment of liberty. But he curbed it, I think, as a resolute rider would curb a rearing steed. He responded neither by word nor movement to the gentle advances made him.

"Papa says you never come to see us now," continued Miss Oliver, looking up. "You are quite a stranger at Vale Hall. He is alone this evening, and not very well: will you return with me and visit him?"

"It is not a seasonable hour to intrude on Mr. Oliver," answered St. John.

"Not a seasonable hour! But, I declare, it is. It is just the hour when papa most wants company: when the works are closed, and he has no business to occupy him. Now, Mr. Rivers, do come. Why are you so very shy, and so very somber?" She filled up the hiatus his silence left by a reply of her own.

"I forgot!" she exclaimed, shaking her beautiful curled head, as if shocked at herself. "I am so giddy and thoughtless! *Do* excuse me. It had slipped my memory that you have good reason to be indisposed for joining in my chatter. Diana and Mary have left you, and Moor House is shut up, and you are so lonely. I am sure I pity you. Do come and see papa."

"Not tonight, Miss Rosamond, not tonight."

Mr. St. John spoke almost like an automaton: himself only knew the effort it cost him thus to refuse.

"Well, if you are so obstinate, I will leave you; for I dare not stay any longer: the dew begins to fall. Good evening!"

She held out her hand. He just touched it. "Good evening!" he repeated, in a voice low and hollow as an echo. She turned; but in a moment returned.

"Are you well?" she asked. Well might she put the question: his face was blanched as her gown.

"Quite well," he enunciated; and, with a bow, he left the gate. She went one way; he another. She turned twice to gaze after him, as she tripped fairy-like down the field; he, as he strode firmly across, never turned at all.

This spectacle of another's suffering and sacrifice, rapt my thoughts from exclusive meditation on my own. Diana Rivers had designated her brother "inexorable as death." She had not exaggerated.

CHAPTER 32

[At first Jane had hard work to teach the ignorant girls. Gradually, however, they grew accustomed to her and began to make good progress. Jane became a favorite in the neighborhood as the farmers saw the improvement she worked in their daughters. Although she found satisfaction in her accomplishment, she still dreamed of Mr. Rochester.

True to her promise, Rosamond Oliver often visited the school, usually managing to arrive while Mr. Rivers was giving his daily lesson. Jane noted that the beautiful girl's presence always disturbed the minister. Jane decided, after meeting Mr. Oliver, that no hindrances would be put in the way of Mr. Rivers, if he sought Rosamond in marriage. She therefore determined to force Mr. Rivers to talk about his intentions, and to advocate his marriage with Rosamond. When the clergyman unwillingly praised Jane's portrait of Rosamond, Jane boldly advised him to secure the original for his wife. He answered that Rosamond was not made to be the wife of a missionary, and that his vocation was dearer to him than the blood of his veins.

As he was about to go, Mr. Rivers again admired the portrait. Jane offered to make him a copy of it, but he refused the offer, asking what good it would be. And then, just as he was on the point of turning away, his eye seemed to be fixed by something on the tissue paper covering the picture. He tore a strip off the tissue, put it into his glove and vanished without another word.]

CHAPTER 33

WHEN MR. ST. JOHN went, it was beginning to snow; the whirling storm continued all night. The next day a keen wind brought fresh and blinding falls; by twilight the valley was drifted up and almost impassable. I had closed my shutter, laid a mat to the door to prevent the snow from blowing in under it, trimmed my fire, and after sitting nearly an hour on the hearth listening to the muffled

fury of the tempest, I lit a candle, took down Marmion and . . . soon forgot storm in music.

I heard a noise: the wind, I thought, shook the door. No; it was St. John Rivers, who, lifting the latch, came in out of the frozen hurricane—the howling darkness—and stood before me: the cloak that covered his tall figure all white as a glacier. I was almost in consternation; so little had I expected any guest from the blocked-up vale that night.

"Any ill news?" I demanded. "Has anything happened?"

"No. How very easily alarmed you are!" he answered, removing his cloak and hanging it up against the door, toward which he again coolly pushed the mat which his entrance had deranged. He stamped the snow from his boots. . . . Then he approached the fire: "I have had hard work to get here, I assure you," he observed. . . .

"But why are you come?" I could not forbear saying.

"Rather an inhospitable question to put to a visitor; but since you ask it, I answer simply to have a little talk with you; I got tired of my mute books and empty rooms. Besides, since yesterday, I have experienced the excitement of a person to whom a tale has been half-told, and who is impatient to hear the sequel."

He sat down. I recalled his singular conduct of yesterday, and really I began to fear his wits were touched. If he were insane, however, his was a very cool and collected insanity: I had never seen that handsome-featured face of his look more like chiseled marble than it did just now, as he put aside his snow-wet hair from his fore-head and let the fire-light shine free on his pale brow and cheek as pale, where it grieved me to discover the hollow trace of care or sorrow now so plainly graved. I waited, expecting he would say something I could at least comprehend; but his hand was now at his chin, his finger on his lip: he was thinking. It struck me that his hand looked wasted like his face. A perhaps uncalled-for gush of pity came over my heart. I was moved to say—

"I wish Diana or Mary would come and live with you: it is too bad that you should be quite alone; and you are recklessly rash about your own health."

"Not at all," said he: "I care for myself when necessary. I am well now. What do you see amiss in me?"

This was said with a careless, abstracted indifference, which showed that my solicitude was, at least in his opinion, wholly superfluous. I was silenced.

[Mr. Rivers sat silent for a long time, and Jane returned to her own reading. When finally her guest began to speak, it was to relate the story of a poor curate's marriage with a rich girl whose family at once disowned her; of the birth of their daughter and her childhood as a ward of charity; of the girl's attendance at Lowood school, her term as governess to Mr. Rochester of Thornfield Hall, and her flight therefrom, after narrowly escaping a bigamous marriage. The suggestion that Mr. Rochester had been a bad man brought forth an immediate and hot defense of him by Jane, which was all Mr. Rivers needed to confirm his suspicions. He produced the fragment of drawing tissue on which she had absently printed her own name, and Jane admitted her identity. Mr. Rivers then told Jane that she was being sought by all means possible, so that she might inherit the fortune of her uncle, a merchant recently dead in Madeira. The information that she had become the heiress of a fortune of twenty thousand pounds—exactly the sum of which the three Riverses had been disappointed—aroused Jane's curiosity. She demanded to know why the London lawyer Briggs should have happened to write to an obscure clergyman in his effort to find a girl for whom the rest of the country had been scoured in vain. Reluctantly Mr. Rivers then explained that his full name was St. John Eyre Rivers, that his mother was the sister of Jane's father and of John Eyre, late of Madeira, and that it had been Briggs' duty as John Eyre's lawyer to tell the Rivers brother and sisters that they had been passed over in favor of an unknown cousin named Jane Eyre.

No sooner was the relationship known than Jane absolutely resolved on an even division of the fortune among the three cousins and herself. Before he left her cottage that night, Mr. Rivers had promised to write the news to his sisters.]

CHAPTER 34

I was NEAR CHRISTMAS by the time all was settled: the season of general holiday approached. I now closed Morton school; taking care that the parting should not be barren on my side. Good fortune opens the hand as well as the heart wonderfully; and to give some-

what when we have largely received, is but to afford a vent to the unusual ebullition of the sensations. I had long felt with pleasure that many of my rustic scholars liked me, and when we parted, that consciousness was confirmed: they manifested their affection plainly and strongly. Deep was my gratification to find I had really a place in their unsophisticated hearts: I promised them that never a week should pass in future that I did not visit them, and give them an hour's teaching in their school.

Mr. Rivers came up, as—having seen the classes, now numbering sixty girls, file out before me, and locked the door—I stood with the key in my hand, exchanging a few words of special farewell with some half-dozen of my best scholars: as decent, respectable, modest, and well-informed young women as could be found in the ranks of the British peasantry. . . .

"Do you consider you have got your reward for a season of exertion?" asked Mr. Rivers, when they were gone. "Does not the consciousness of having done some real good in your day and generation give pleasure?"

"Doubtless."

"And you have only toiled a few months! Would not a life devoted to the task of regenerating your race be well spent?"

"Yes," I said; "but I could not go on forever so: I want to enjoy my own faculties as well as to cultivate those of other people. I must enjoy them now; don't recall either my mind or body to the school; I am out of it and disposed for full holiday."

He looked grave. "What now? What sudden eagerness is this you evince? What are you going to do?"

"To be active: as active as I can. And first I must beg you to set Hannah at liberty, and get somebody else to wait on you."

"Do you want her?"

"Yes, to go with me to Moor House: Diana and Mary will be at home in a week, and I want to have everything in order against their arrival."

"I understand: I thought you were for flying off on some excursion. It is better so: Hannah shall go with you."

"Tell her to be ready by tomorrow then; and here is the school-room key: I will give you the key of my cottage in the morning."

He took it. "You give it up very gleefully," said he: "I don't quite understand your light-heartedness; because I cannot tell what employment you propose to yourself as a substitute for the one you are

relinquishing. What aim, what purpose, what ambition in life have you now?"

"My first aim will be to clean down (do you comprehend the full force of the expression?) to clean down Moor House from chamber to cellar; my next to rub it up with beeswax, oil, and an indefinite number of cloths, till it glitters again; my third, to arrange every chair, table, bed, carpet, with mathematical precision; afterward I shall go near to ruin you in coals and peat to keep up good fires in every room; and lastly, the two days preceding that on which your sisters are expected, will be devoted by Hannah and me to such a beating of eggs, sorting of currants, grating of spices, compounding of Christmas cakes, chopping up of materials for mince-pies, and solemnizing of other culinary rites, as words can convey but an inadequate notion of to the uninitiated like you. My purpose, in short, is to have all things in an absolutely perfect state of readiness for Diana and Mary, before next Thursday; and my ambition is to give them a beau-ideal of a welcome when they come."

St. John smiled slightly: still he was dissatisfied.

"It is all very well for the present," said he: "but seriously, I trust that when the first flush of vivacity is over, you will look a little higher than domestic endearments and household joys."

"The best things the world has!" I interrupted.

"No, Jane, no: this world is not the scene of fruition; do not attempt to make it so: nor of rest; do not turn slothful."

"I mean, on the contrary, to be busy."

"Jane, I excuse you for the present: two months' grace I allow you for the full enjoyment of your new position, and for pleasing yourself with this late-found charm of relationship; but then, I hope you will begin to look beyond Moor House and Morton, and sisterly society, and the selfish calm and sensual comfort of civilized affluence. I hope your energies will then once more trouble you with their strength."

I looked at him with surprise. "St. John," I said, "I think you are almost wicked to talk so. I am disposed to be as content as a queen, and you try to stir me up to restlessness! To what end?"

"To the end of turning to profit the talents which God has committed to your keeping; and of which he will surely one day demand a strict account. Jane, I shall watch you closely and anxiously—I warn you of that. And try to restrain the disproportionate fervor with which you throw yourself into commonplace home pleasures.

Don't cling so tenaciously to ties of the flesh; save your constancy and ardor for an adequate cause; forbear to waste them on trite transient objects. Do you hear, Jane?"

"Yes; just as if you were speaking Greek. I feel I have adequate cause to be happy, and I will be happy. Good-bye!"

Happy at Moor House I was, and hard I worked. . . . The eventful Thursday at length came. They were expected about dark, and ere dusk, fires were lit upstairs and below; the kitchen was in perfect trim; Hannah and I were dressed and all was in readiness.

St. John arrived first. I had entreated him to keep quite clear of the house till everything was arranged: and, indeed, the bare idea of the commotion, at once sordid and trivial, going on within its walls sufficed to scare him to estrangements. He found me in the kitchen, watching the progress of certain cakes for tea, then baking. Approaching the hearth, he asked if I was at last satisfied with housemaid's work. I answered by inviting him to accompany me on a general inspection of the result of my labors. With some difficulty, I got him to make the tour of the house.

[St. John gave no sign of any pleasure in the improved aspect of his abode. Shortly after Jane showed him the parlor he was engrossed in a book.]

"They are coming! they are coming!" cried Hannah, throwing open the parlor door. At the same moment old Carlo barked joyfully. Out I ran. It was now dark; but a rumbling of wheels was audible. Hannah soon had a lantern lit. The vehicle had stopped at the wicket: the driver opened the door: first one well-known form, then another, stepped out. In a minute I had my face under their bonnets, in contact first with Mary's soft cheek, then with Diana's flowing curls. They laughed—kissed me—then Hannah: patted Carlo, who was half wild with delight, asked eagerly if all was well; and being assured in the affirmative, hastened into the house.

They were stiff with their long and jolting drive from Whitcross, and chilled with the frosty night air; but their pleasant countenances expanded to the cheerful firelight. While the driver and Hannah brought in the boxes, they demanded St. John. At this moment he advanced from the parlor. They both threw their arms round his neck at once. He gave each one quiet kiss, said in a low tone a few words of welcome, stood a while to be talked to, and then, in-

timating that he supposed they would soon rejoin him in the parlor, withdrew there as to a place of refuge.

I had lit their candles to go upstairs, but Diana had first to give hospitable orders respecting the driver; this done, both followed me. They were delighted with the renovation and decoration of their rooms; with the new drapery and fresh carpets, and rich tinted china vases: they expressed their gratification ungrudgingly. I had the pleasure of feeling that my arrangements met their wishes exactly; and that what I had done added a vivid charm to their joyous return home.

Sweet was that evening. My cousins, full of exhilaration, were so eloquent in narrative and comment, that their fluency covered St. John's taciturnity: he was sincerely glad to see his sisters; but in their glow of fervor and flow of joy he could not sympathize. The event of the day—that is, the return of Diana and Mary—pleased him; but the accompaniments of that event, the glad tumult, the garrulous glee of reception, irked him: I saw he wished the quieter morrow was come. In the very meridian of the night's enjoyment, about an hour after tea, a rap was heard at the door. Hannah entered with the intimation that "a poor lad was come, at that unlikely time, to fetch Mr. Rivers to see his mother, who was drawing away."

"Where does she live, Hannah?"

"Clear up at Whitcross Brow, almost four miles off; and moor and moss all the way."

"Tell him I will go."

"I'm sure, sir, you had better not. It's the worst road to travel after dark that can be: there's no track at all over the bog. And then it is such a bitter night—the keenest wind you ever felt. You had better send word, sir, that you will be there in the morning."

But he was already in the passage, putting on his cloak; and without one objection, one murmur, he departed. It was then nine o'clock: he did not return till midnight. Starved and tired enough he was: but he looked happier than when he set out. He had performed an act of duty; made an exertion; felt his own strength to do and deny, and was on better terms with himself.

I am afraid the whole of the ensuing week tried his patience. It was Christmas week: we took to no settled employment, but spent it in a sort of merry domestic dissipation. The air of the moors, the freedom of home, the dawn of prosperity, acted on Diana and Mary's spirits like some life-giving elixir: they were gay from morn-

ing till noon, and from noon till night. They could always talk; and their discourse, witty, pithy, original, had such charms for me, that I preferred listening to, and sharing in it, to doing anything else. St. John did not rebuke our vivacity; but he escaped from it: he was seldom in the house; his parish was large, the population scattered, and he found daily business in visiting the sick and poor in its different districts.

One morning, at breakfast, Diana, after looking a little pensive for some minutes, asked him if his plans were yet unchanged. "Unchanged and unchangeable," was the reply. And he pro-

"Unchanged and unchangeable," was the reply. And he proceeded to inform us that his departure from England was now definitely fixed for the ensuing year.

"And Rosamond Oliver?" suggested Mary: the words seeming to escape her lips involuntarily: for no sooner had she uttered them, than she made a gesture as if wishing to recall them. St. John had a book in his hand—it was his unsocial custom to read at meals—he closed it, and looked up.

"Rosamond Oliver," said he, "is about to be married to Mr. Granby; one of the best connected and most estimable residents in S——, grandson and heir to Sir Frederic Granby; I had the intelligence from her father yesterday."

His sisters looked at each other, and at me; we all three looked at him: he was serene as glass.

"The match must have been got up hastily," said Diana: "they cannot have known each other long."

"But two months: they met in October at the county ball at S—. But where there are no obstacles to a union, as in the present case, where the connection is in every point desirable, delays are unnecessary: they will be married as soon as S—— Place, which Sir Frederic gives up to them, can be refitted for their reception."

The first time I found St. John alone after this communication, I felt tempted to inquire if the event distressed him: but he scemed so little to need sympathy, that, so far from venturing to offer him more, I experienced some shame at the recollection of what I had already hazarded. Besides, I was out of practice in talking to him: his reserve was again frozen over, and my frankness was congealed beneath it. He had not kept his promise of treating me like his sisters; he continually made little, chilling differences between us, which did not at all tend to the development of cordiality: in short, now that I was acknowledged his kinswoman, and lived under the same roof

with him, I felt the distance between us to be far greater than when he had known me only as the village schoolmistress. When I remembered how far I had once been admitted to his confidence, I could hardly comprehend his present frigidity.

Such being the case, I felt not a little surprised when he raised his head suddenly from the desk over which he was stooping, and said:

"You see, Jane, the battle is fought and the victory won."

Startled at being thus addressed, I did not immediately reply; after a moment's hesitation I answered:

"But are you sure, you are not in the position of those conquerors whose triumphs have cost them too dear? Would not such another ruin you?"

"I think not; and if I were, it does not much signify; I shall never be called upon to contend for such another. The event of the conflict is decisive: my way is now clear; I thank God for it!" So saying, he returned to his papers and his silence.

As our mutual happiness (i.e. Diana's, Mary's, and mine) settled into a quieter character, and we resumed our usual habits and regular studies, St. John stayed more at home: he sat with us in the same room, sometimes for hours together. While Mary drew, Diana pursued a course of encyclopædic reading she had (to my awe and amazement) undertaken, and I fagged away at German, he pondered a mystic lore of his own: that of some Eastern tongue, the acquisition of which he thought necessary to his plans.

Thus engaged, he appeared, sitting in his own recess, quiet and absorbed enough; but that blue eye of his had a habit of leaving the outlandish-looking grammar, and wandering over, and sometimes fixing upon us, his fellow-students, with a curious intensity of observation: if caught, it would be instantly withdrawn; yet ever and anon, it returned searchingly to our table. I wondered what it meant: I wondered, too, at the punctual satisfaction he never failed to exhibit on an occasion that seemed to me of small moment, namely, my weekly visit to Morton School; and still more was I puzzled when, if the day was unfavorable, if there was snow, or rain, or high wind, and his sisters urged me not to go, he would invariably make light of their solicitude, and encourage me to accomplish the task without regard to the elements.

"Jane is not such a weakling as you would make her," he would say: "she can bear a mountain blast, or a shower, or a few flakes of snow, as well as any of us. Her constitution is both sound and elastic

—better calculated to endure variations of climate than many more robust."

And when I returned, sometimes a good deal tired, and not a little weather-beaten, I never dared complain, because I saw that to murmur would be to vex him: on all occasions fortitude pleased him: the reverse was a special annoyance.

One afternoon, however, I got leave to stay at home, because I really had a cold. His sisters were gone to Morton in my stead: I sat reading Schiller; he, deciphering his crabbed Oriental scrolls. As I exchanged a translation for an exercise, I happened to look his way: there I found myself under the influence of the ever-watchful blue eye. How long it had been searching me through and through, and over and over, I cannot tell: so keen was it, and yet so cold, I felt for the moment superstitious—as if I were sitting in the room with something uncanny.

"Jane, what are you doing?"

"Learning German."

"I want you to give up German, and learn Hindustani."

"You are not in earnest?"

"In such earnest that I must have it so: and I will tell you why."

He then went on to explain that Hindustani was the language he himself was at present studying: that, as he advanced, he was apt to forget the commencement; that it would assist him greatly to have a pupil with whom he might again and again go over the elements, and so fix them thoroughly in his mind; that his choice had hovered for some time between me and his sisters; but that he had fixed on me, because he saw I could sit at a task the longest of the three. Would I do him this favor? I should not, perhaps, have to make the sacrifice long; as it wanted now barely three months to his departure.

St. John was not a man to be lightly refused: you felt that every impression made on him, either for pain or pleasure, was deepgraved and permanent. I consented. When Diana and Mary returned, the former found her scholar transferred from her to her brother: she laughed; and both she and Mary agreed that St. John should never have persuaded them to such a step. He answered, quietly:

"I know it."

I found him a very patient, very forbearing, and yet an exacting master: he expected me to do a great deal; and when I fulfilled his expectations, he, in his own way, fully testified his approbation. By

degrees, he acquired a certain influence over me that took away my liberty of mind: his praise and notice were more restraining than his indifference. I could no longer talk or laugh freely when he was by; because a tiresomely importunate instinct reminded me that vivacity (at least in me) was distasteful to him. I was so fully aware that only serious moods and occupations were acceptable, that in his presence every effort to sustain or follow any other became vain: I fell under a freezing spell. When he said "go," I went; "come," I came; "do this," I did it. But I did not love my servitude: I wished, many a time, he had continued to neglect me.

One evening, when, at bedtime, his sisters and I stood round him, bidding him good night, he kissed each of them, as was his custom; and, as was equally his custom, he gave me his hand. Diana, who chanced to be in a frolicsome humor (she was not painfully controlled by his will; for hers, in another way, was as strong), exclaimed:

"St. John! you used to call Jane your third sister, but you don't treat her as such: you should kiss her too."

She pushed me toward him. I thought Diana very provoking, and felt uncomfortably confused; and while I was thus thinking and feeling, St. John bent his head; his Greek face was brought to a level with mine, his eyes questioned my eyes piercingly—he kissed me. There are no such things as marble kisses, or ice kisses, or I should say, my ecclesiastical cousin's salute belonged to one of these classes; but there may be experiment kisses, and his was an experiment kiss. When given, he viewed me to learn the result; it was not striking: I am sure I did not blush; perhaps I might have turned a little pale, for I felt as if the kiss were a seal affixed to my fetters. He never omitted the ceremony afterward, and the gravity and quiescence with which I underwent it, seemed to invest it for him with a certain charm.

As for me, I daily wished more to please him: but to do so, I felt daily more and more that I must disown half my nature, stifle half my faculties, wrest my tastes from their original bent, force myself to the adoption of pursuits for which I had no natural vocation. He wanted to train me to an elevation I could never reach; it racked me hourly to aspire to the standard he uplifted. The thing was as impossible as to mold my irregular features to his correct and classic pattern, to give to my changeable green eyes the sea-blue tint and solemn luster of his own.

Not his ascendancy alone, however, held me in thrall at present.

Of late it had been easy enough for me to look sad: a cankering evil sat at my heart and drained my happiness at its source—the evil of suspense.

[Jane had not forgotten Mr. Rochester for a moment. Inquiries about him directed to Briggs in London and to Mrs. Fairfax alike went unanswered, though Jane waited six months with patience. Then, while a fine spring shone round her, she sank into despair. One day when she and St. John were at their studies, her voice failed and she broke into sobs.]

St. John and I were the only occupants of the parlor: Diana was practicing her music in the drawing room, Mary was gardening—it was a very fine May-day, clear, sunny, and breezy. My companion expressed no surprise at this emotion, nor did he question me as to its cause; he only said:

"We will wait a few minutes, Jane, till you are more composed." And while I smothered the paroxysm with all haste, he sat calm and patient, leaning on his desk and looking like a physician watching with the eye of science an expected and fully-understood crisis in a patient's malady. Having stifled my sobs, wiped my eyes, and muttered something about not being very well that morning, I resumed my task, and succeeded in completing it. St. John put away my books and his, locked his desk, and said:

"Now, Jane, you shall take a walk; and with me."

"I will call Diana and Mary."

"No. I want only one companion this morning, and that must be you: put on your things; go out by the kitchen door: take the road toward the head of Marsh Glen: I will join you in a moment."

I know no medium: I never in my life have known any medium in my dealings with positive, hard characters, antagonistic to my own, between absolute submission and determined revolt. I have always faithfully observed the one, up to the very moment of bursting, sometimes with volcanic vehemence, into the other; and as neither present circumstances warranted, nor my present mood inclined me to mutiny, I observed careful obedience to St. John's directions; and in ten minutes I was treading the wild track of the glen, side by side with him.

The breeze was from the west: it came over the hills, sweet with scents of heath and rush; the sky was of stainless blue; the stream descending the ravine, swelled with past spring rains, poured along plentiful and clear, catching golden gleams from the sun, and sapphire tints from the firmament. As we advanced and left the track, we trod a soft turf, mossy fine and emerald green, minutely enameled with a tiny white flower, and spangled with a star-like yellow blossom: the hills, meantime, shut us quite in; for the glen, toward its head, wound to their very core.

"Let us rest here," said St. John, as we reached the first stragglers of a battalion of rocks, guarding a sort of pass, beyond which the beck rushed down a waterfall; and where, still a little further, the mountain shook off turf and flower, had only heath for raiment, and crag for gem—where it exaggerated the wild to the savage, and exchanged the fresh for the frowning—where it guarded the forlorn hope of solitude, and a last refuge for silence.

I took a seat: St. John stood near me. He looked up the pass and down the hollow; his glance wandered away with the stream, and returned to traverse the unclouded heaven which colored it: he removed his hat, let the breeze stir his hair and kiss his brow. He seemed in communion with the genius of the haunt: with his eye he bade farewell to something.

"And I shall see it again," he said aloud, "in dreams, when I sleep by the Ganges: and again, in a more remote hour—when another slumber overcomes me—on the shore of a darker stream."

Strange words of a strange love! An austere patriot's passion for his fatherland! He sat down; for half an hour we never spoke; neither he to me nor I to him; that interval passed, he recommenced:

"Jane, I go in six weeks: I have taken my berth in an East Indiaman which sails on the twentieth of June."

"God will protect you; for you have undertaken His work," I answered.

"Yes," said he, "there is my glory and joy. I am the servant of an infallible master. I am not going out under human guidance, subject to the defective laws and erring control of my feeble fellow-worms: my king, my lawgiver, my captain, is the All-perfect. It seems strange to me that all round me do not burn to enlist under the same banner—to join in the same enterprise."

"All have not your powers: and it would be folly for the feeble to wish to march with the strong."

"I do not speak to the feeble, or think of them: I address only such as are worthy of the work, and competent to accomplish it."

"Those are few in number, and difficult to discover."

"You say truly: but when found, it is right to stir them up—to urge and exhort them to the effort—to show them what their gifts are, and why they were given—to speak Heaven's message in their ear—to offer them, direct from God, a place in the ranks of His chosen."

"If they are really qualified for the task, will not their own hearts be the first to inform them of it?"

I felt as if an awful charm was framing round and gathering over me: I trembled to hear some fatal word spoken which would at once declare and rivet the spell.

"And what does your heart say?" demanded St. John.

"My heart is mute—my heart is mute," I answered, struck and thrilled.

"Then I must speak for it," continued the deep, relentless voice. "Jane, come with me to India: come as my helpmeet and fellow-laborer."

The glen and sky spun round: the hills heaved! It was as if I had heard a summons from Heaven—as if a visionary messenger, like him of Macedonia, had enounced, "Come over and help us!" But I was no apostle, I could not behold the herald, I could not receive his call.

"Oh, St. John!" I cried, "have some mercy!"

I appealed to one who, in the discharge of what he believed his duty, knew neither mercy nor remorse. He continued:

"God and nature intended you for a missionary's wife. It is not personal, but mental endowments they have given you: you are formed for labor, not for love. A missionary's wife you must—shall be. You shall be mine: I claim you—not for my pleasure, but for my Sovereign's service."

"I am not fit for it: I have no vocation," I said.

He had calculated on these first objections: he was not irritated by them. Indeed, as he leaned back against the crag behind him, folded his arms on his chest, and fixed his countenance, I saw he was prepared for a long and trying opposition, and had taken in a stock of patience to last him to its close—resolved, however, that that close should be conquest for him.

"Humility, Jane," said he, "is the groundwork of Christian virtues: you say right that you are not fit for the work. Who is fit for it? Or who, that ever was truly called, believed himself worthy of the summons? I, for instance, am but dust and ashes. With St. Paul, I ac-

knowledge myself the chiefest of sinners: but I do not suffer this sense of my personal vileness to daunt me. I know my Leader: that He is just as well as mighty; and while He has chosen a feeble instrument to perform a great task, He will, from the boundless stores of His providence, supply the inadequacy of the means to the end. Think like me, Jane—trust like me. It is the Rock of Ages I ask you to lean on: do not doubt but it will bear the weight of your human weakness."

"I do not understand a missionary life: I have never studied missionary labors."

"There I, humble as I am, can give you the aid you want: I can set your task from hour to hour; stand by you always; help you from moment to moment. This I could do in the beginning: soon (for I know your powers) you would be as strong and apt as myself, and would not require my help."

"But my powers—where are they for this undertaking? I do not feel them. Nothing speaks or stirs in me while you talk. I am sensible of no light kindling—no life quickening—no voice counselling or cheering. Oh, I wish I could make you see how much my mind is at this moment like a rayless dungeon, with one shrinking fear fettered in its depths—the fear of being persuaded by you to attempt what I cannot accomplish!"

"I have an answer for you-hear it. I have watched you ever since we first met: I have made you my study for ten months. I have proved you in that time by sundry tests: and what have I seen and elicited? In the village school I found you could perform well, punctually, uprightly, labor uncongenial to your habits and inclinations; I saw you could perform it with capacity and tact: you could win while you controlled. In the calm with which you learned you had become suddenly rich, I read a mind clear of the vice of Demas: lucre had no undue power over you. In the resolute readiness which you cut your wealth into four shares, keeping but one to yourself, and relinquishing the three others to the claim of abstract justice, I recognized a soul that reveled in the flame and excitement of sacrifice. In the tractability with which, at my wish, you forsook a study in which you were interested, and adopted another because it interested me; in the untiring assiduity with which you have since persevered in it—in the unflagging energy and unshaken temper with which you have met its difficulties—I acknowledge the complement of the qualities I seek. Jane, you are docile, diligent, disinterested, faithful, constant, and courageous; very gentle, and very heroic: cease to mistrust yourself—

I can trust you unreservedly. As a conductress of Indian schools, and a helper among Indian women, your assistance will be to me invaluable."

My iron shroud contracted round me; persuasion advanced with slow sure step. Shut my eyes as I would, these last words of his succeeded in making the way, which had seemed blocked up, comparatively clear. My work, which had appeared so vague, so hopelessly diffuse, condensed itself as he proceeded, and assumed a definite form under his shaping hand. He waited for an answer. I demanded a quarter of an hour to think, before I again hazarded a reply.

"Very willingly," he rejoined: and rising, he strode a little distance up the pass, threw himself down on a swell of heath, and there lay still.

[Jane knew she could force herself to do what St. John demanded, and that she could summon to the task resources of which he had not dreamed. But he prized her as a soldier might a good weapon, and not with a husband's heart. Marriage would be impossible.]

I looked toward the knoll: there he lay, still as a prostrate column; his face turned to me: his eye beaming watchful, and keen. He started to his feet, and approached me.

"I am ready to go to India, if I may go free."

"Your answer requires a commentary," he said; "it is not clear."

"You have hitherto been my adopted brother: I, your adopted sister; let us continue as such: you and I had better not marry."

He shook his head. "Adopted fraternity will not do in this case. If you were my real sister it would be different: I should take you, and seek no wife. But as it is, either our union must be consecrated and sealed by marriage, or it cannot exist: practical obstacles oppose themselves to any other plan. Do you not see it, Jane? Consider a moment—your strong sense will guide you."

I did consider: and still my sense, such as it was, directed me only to the fact that we did not love each other as man and wife should; and therefore it inferred we ought not to marry. I said so. "St. John," I returned, "I regard you as a brother—you, me as a sister: so let us continue."

"We cannot—we cannot," he answered, with short, sharp determination: "it would not do. You have said you will go with me to India: remember—you have said that."

"Conditionally."

"Well—well. To the main point—the departure with me from England, the co-operation with me in my future labors—you do not object. You have already as good as put your hand to the plough: you are too consistent to withdraw it. You have but one end to keep in view—how the work you have undertaken can best be done. Simplify your complicated interests, feelings, thoughts, wishes, aims; merge all considerations in one purpose: that of fulfilling with effect—with power—the mission of your great Master. To do so, you must have a coadjutor—not a brother; that is a loose tie; but a husband. I, too, do not want a sister; a sister might any day be taken from me. I want a wife: the sole helpmeet I can influence efficiently in life, and retain absolutely till death."

I shuddered as he spoke: I felt his influence in my marrow—his hold on my limbs.

"Seek one elsewhere than in me, St. John: seek one fitted to you."

"One fitted to my purpose, you mean—fitted to my vocation. Again I tell you it is not the insignificant private individual—the mere man, with the man's selfish senses—I wish to mate: it is a missionary."

"And I will give the missionary my energies—it is all he wants—but not myself: that would be only adding the husk and shell to the kernel. For them he has no use: I retain them."

"You cannot—you ought not. Do, you think God will be satisfied with half an oblation? Will He accept a mutilated sacrifice? It is the cause of God I advocate: it is under His standard I enlist you. I cannot accept on His behalf a divided allegiance: it must be entire."

"Oh! I will give my heart to God," I said. "You do not want it..."

"Do not let us forget that this is a solemn matter," he said ere long; "one of which we may neither think nor talk lightly without sin. I trust, Jane, you are in earnest when you say you will give your heart to God: it is all I want. Once wrench your heart from man, and fix it on your Maker, the advancement of that Maker's spiritual kingdom on earth will be your chief delight and endeavor; you will be ready to do at once whatever furthers that end. You will see what impetus would be given to your efforts and mine by our physical and mental union in marriage: the only union that gives a character of permanent conformity to the destinies and designs of human beings: and, passing over all minor caprices—all trivial difficulties and delicacies of feeling

—all scruple about the degree, kind, strength, or tenderness of mere personal inclination—you will hasten to enter into that union at once. . . ."

"St. John!" I exclaimed.

"Well?" he answered, icily.

"I repeat: I freely consent to go with you as your fellow-missionary; but not as your wife; I cannot marry you and become part of you."

"A part of me you must become," he answered steadily; "otherwise the whole bargain is void. How can I, a man not yet thirty, take out with me to India a girl of nineteen, unless she be married to me? How can we be for ever together—sometimes in solitudes, sometimes amid savage tribes—and unwed?"

"Very well," I said shortly; "under the circumstances, quite as well as if I were either your real sister, or a man and a clergyman like yourself."

"It is known that you are not my sister; I cannot introduce you as such: to attempt it would be to fasten injurious suspicions on us both. And for the rest, though you have a man's vigorous brain, you have a woman's heart, and—it would not do."

"It would do," I affirmed with some disdain, "perfectly well. I have a woman's heart; but not where you are concerned; for you I have only a comrade's constancy; a fellow-soldier's frankness, fidelity, fraternity, if you like; a neophyte's respect and submission to his hierophant: nothing more—don't fear."

"It is what I want," he said, speaking to himself; "it is just what I want. And there are obstacles in the way: they must be hewn down. Jane, you would not repent marrying me; be certain of that; we must be married. I repeat it: there is no other way; and undoubtedly enough of love would follow upon marriage to render the union right even in your eyes."

"I scorn your idea of love," I could not help saying, as I rose up and stood before him, leaning my back against the rock. "I scorn the counterfeit sentiment you offer: yes, St. John, and I scorn you when you offer it."

He looked at me fixedly: compressing his well-cut lips while he did so. Whether he was incensed or surprised, or what, it was not easy to tell: he could command his countenance thoroughly.

"I scarcely expected to hear that expression from you," he said: "I think I have done and uttered nothing to deserve scorn."

I was touched by his gentle tone, and overawed by his high, calm mien.

"Forgive me the words, St. John: but it is your own fault that I have been roused to speak so unguardedly. You have introduced a topic on which our natures are at variance—a topic we should never discuss: the very name of love is an apple of discord between us—if the reality were required what should we do? How should we feel? My dear cousin, abandon your scheme of marriage—forget it."

"No," said he; "it is a long-cherished scheme, and the only one which can secure my great end: but I shall urge you no further at present. Tomorrow, I leave home for Cambridge: I have many friends there to whom I should wish to say farewell. I shall be absent a fortnight—take that space of time to consider my offer: and do not forget that if you reject it, it is not me you deny, but God. Through my means, He opens to you a noble career; as my wife only can you enter upon it. Refuse to be my wife, and you limit yourself for ever to a track of selfish ease and barren obscurity. Tremble lest in that case you should be numbered with those who have denied the faith, and are worse than infidels!"

He had done. Turning from me, he once more-

"Looked to river, looked to hill:"

But this time his feelings were all pent in his heart: I was not worthy to hear them uttered. As I walked by his side homeward, I read well in his iron silence all he felt toward me: the disappointment of an austere and despotic nature, which has met resistance where it expected submission—the disapprobation of a cool, inflexible judgment, which has detected in another feelings and views in which it has no power to sympathize: in short, as a man, he would have wished to coerce me into obedience: it was only as a sincere Christian he bore so patiently with my perversity, and allowed so long a space for reflection and repentance.

That night, after he had kissed his sisters, he thought proper to forget even to shake hands with me; but left the room in silence. I—who, though I had no love, had much friendship for him—was hurt by the marked omission: so much hurt that tears started to my eyes.

"I see you and St. John have been quarreling, Jane," said Diana, "during your walk on the moor. But go after him; he is now lingering in the passage, expecting you—he will make it up."

I have not much pride under such circumstances: I would always

rather be happy than dignified; and I ran after him—he stood at the foot of the stairs.

"Good-night, St. John," said I.

"Good-night, Jane," he replied calmly.

"Then shake hands," I added.

What a cold, loose touch he impressed on my fingers! He was deeply displeased by what had occurred that day: cordiality would not warm, nor tears move him. No happy reconciliation was to be had with him—no cheering smile or generous word: but still the Christian was patient and placid; and when I asked him if he forgave me, he answered that he was not in the habit of cherishing the remembrance of vexation; that he had nothing to forgive, not having been offended.

And with that answer he left me. I would much rather he had knocked me down.

CHAPTER 35

HE DID NOT LEAVE for Cambridge the next day, as he had said he would. He deferred his departure a whole week; and during that time he made me feel what severe punishment a good, yet stern, a conscientious, yet implacable man can inflict on one who has offended him. Without one overt act of hostility, one upbraiding word, he contrived to impress me momently with the conviction that I was put beyond the pale of his favor.

Not that St. John harbored a spirit of unchristian vindictiveness—not that he would have injured a hair of my head, if it had been fully in his power to do so. Both by nature and principle, he was superior to the mean gratification of vengeance: he had forgiven me for saying I scorned him and his love, but he had not forgotten the words; and as long as he and I lived he never would forget them. I saw by his look, when he turned to me, that they were always written on the air between me and him; whenever I spoke, they sounded in my voice to his ear; and their echo toned every answer he gave me.

He did not abstain from conversing with me: he even called me as usual each morning to join him at his desk; and I fear the corrupt man within him had a pleasure unimparted to, and unshared by, the pure Christian, in evincing with what skill he could, while acting and speak-

ing apparently just as usual, extract from every deed and every phrase the spirit of interest and approval which had formerly communicated a certain austere charm to his language and manner. To me, he was in reality become no longer flesh, but marble; his eye was a cold, bright, blue gem; his tongue, a speaking instrument—nothing more.

All this was torture to me—refined, lingering torture. It kept up a slow fire of indignation, and a trembling trouble of grief, which harassed and crushed me altogether. I felt how—if I were his wife, this good man, pure as the deep sunless source, could soon kill me: without drawing from my veins a single drop of blood, or receiving on his own crystal conscience the faintest stain of crime. Especially I felt this, when I made any attempt to propitiate him. No ruth met my ruth. He experienced no suffering from estrangement—no yearning after reconciliation; and though, more than once, my fast falling tears blistered the page over which we both bent, they produced no more effect on him than if his heart had been really a matter of stone or metal. To his sisters, meantime, he was somewhat kinder than usual: as if afraid that mere coldness would not sufficiently convince me how completely I was banished and banned, he added the force of contrast: and this I am sure he did, not by malice, but on principle.

The night before he left home, happening to see him walking in the garden about sunset, and remembering, as I looked at him, that this man, alienated as he now was, had once saved my life, and that we were near relations, I was moved to make a last attempt to regain his friendship. I went out and approached him, as he stood leaning over the little gate: I spoke to the point at once.

"St. John, I am unhappy, because you are still angry with me. Let us be friends."

"I hope we are friends," was the unmoved reply; while he still watched the rising of the moon, which he had been contemplating as I approached.

"No, St. John, we are not friends as we were. You know that."

"Are we not? That is wrong. For my part, I wish you no ill and all good."

"I believe you, St. John; for I am sure you are incapable of wishing any one ill: but, as I am your kinswoman, I should desire somewhat more of affection than that sort of general philanthropy you extend to mere strangers."

"Of course," he said. "Your wish is reasonable; and I am far from regarding you as a stranger."

This, spoken in a cool, tranquil tone, was mortifying and baffling enough. Had I attended to the suggestions of pride and ire, I should immediately have left him: but something worked within me more strongly than those feelings could. I deeply venerated my cousin's talent and principle. His friendship was of value to me: to lose it tried me severely. I would not so soon relinquish the attempt to reconquer it.

"Must we part in this way, St. John? And when you go to India, will you leave me so, without a kinder word than you have yet spoken?"

He now turned quite from the moon, and faced me.

"When I go to India, Jane, will I leave you? What! do you not go to India?"

"You said I could not, unless I married you."

"And you will not marry me? You adhere to that resolution? . . ."

"No, St. John, I will not marry you. I adhere to my resolution."

The avalanche had shaken and slid a little forward; but it did not yet crash down.

"Once more, why this refusal?" he asked.

"Formerly," I answered, "because you did not love me; now, I reply, because you almost hate me. If I were to marry you, you would kill me. You are killing me now."

His lips and cheeks turned white—quite white.

"I should kill you—I am killing you? Your words are such as ought not to be used: violent, unfeminine, and untrue. They betray an unfortunate state of mind: they merit severe reproof: they would seem inexcusable; but that it is the duty of man to forgive his fellow, even until seventy-and-seven times."

I had finished the business now. While earnestly wishing to erase from his mind the trace of my former offense, I had stamped on that tenacious surface, another and far deeper impression: I had burned it in.

"Now, you will indeed hate me," I said. "It is useless to attempt to conciliate you: I see I have made an eternal enemy of you."

A fresh wrong did these words inflict: the worse, because they touched on the truth. That bloodless lip quivered to a temporary spasm. I knew the steely ire I had whetted. I was heart-wrung.

"You utterly misinterpret my words," I said, at once seizing his hand: "I have no intention to grieve or pain you—indeed, I have not."

Most bitterly he smiled—most decidedly he withdrew his hand from mine. "And now you recall your promise, and will not go to India at all, I presume?" said he, after a considerable pause.

"Yes, I will, as your assistant," I answered.

A very long silence succeeded. What struggle there was in him between Nature and Grace in this interval, I cannot tell: only singular gleams scintillated in his eyes, and strange shadows passed over his face. He spoke at last.

"I before proved to you the absurdity of a single woman of your age proposing to accompany abroad a single man of mine. I proved it to you in such terms as, I should have thought, would have prevented your ever again alluding to the plan. That you have done so, I regret —for your sake."

I interrupted him. Anything like a tangible reproach gave me courage at once. "Keep to common sense, St. John: you are verging on nonsense. You pretend to be shocked by what I have said. You are not really shocked; for, with your superior mind, you cannot be either so dull or so conceited as to misunderstand my meaning. I say again, I will be your curate, if you like, but never your wife."

Again he turned lividly pale; but, as before, controlled his passion perfectly. He answered emphatically, but calmly:

"A female curate, who is not my wife, would never suit me. With me, then, it seems, you cannot go: but if you are sincere in your offer, I will, while in town, speak to a married missionary, whose wife needs a coadjutor. Your own fortune will make you independent of the Society's aid; and thus you may still be spared the dishonor of breaking your promise, and deserting the band you engaged to join."

Now I never had either given any formal promise, or entered into any engagement; and this language was all much too hard, and much too despotic for the occasion. I replied:

"There is no dishonor; no breach of promise; no desertion in the case. I am not under the slightest obligation to go to India: especially with strangers. With you I would have ventured much; because I admire, confide in, and, as a sister, I love you: but I am convinced that, go when and with whom I would, I should not live long in that climate."

"Ah! you are afraid of yourself," he said, curling his lip.

"I am. God did not give me my life to throw away; and to do as you wish me would, I begin to think, be almost equivalent to committing suicide. Moreover, before I definitely resolve on quitting England

I will know for certain, whether I cannot be of greater use by remaining in it than by leaving it."

"What do you mean?"

"It would be fruitless to attempt to explain: but there is a point on which I have long endured painful doubt; and I can go nowhere till by some means that doubt is removed."

"I know where your heart turns, and to what it clings. The interest you cherish is lawless and unconsecrated. Long since you ought to have crushed it: now you should blush to allude to it. You think of Mr. Rochester?"

It was true. I confessed it by silence.

"Are you going to seek Mr. Rochester?"

"I must find out what has become of him."

"It remains for me, then," he said, "to remember you in my prayers; and to entreat God for you, in all earnestness, that you may not indeed become a castaway. I had thought I recognized in you one of the chosen. But God sees not as man sees: His will be done."

He opened the gate, passed through it, and strayed away down the glen. He was soon out of sight.

[Diana, long aware of her brother's extraordinary attention to Jane, had seen the two together in the garden. When Jane returned to the house Diana questioned her about St. John's intentions and learned of the proposal and of Jane's refusal to marry where she was not loved. As St. John returned to the house, Jane stopped talking and hastened upstairs.]

But I was forced to meet him again at supper. During that meal he appeared just as composed as usual. I had thought he would hardly speak to me, and I was certain he had given up the pursuit of his matrimonial scheme: the sequel showed I was mistaken on both points. He addressed me precisely in his ordinary manner; or what had, of late, been his ordinary manner—one scrupulously polite. No doubt he had invoked the help of the Holy Spirit to subdue the anger I had roused in him, and now believed he had forgiven me once more.

For the evening reading before prayers, he selected the twenty-first chapter of Revelation. It was at all times pleasant to listen, while from his lips fell the words of the Bible: never did his fine voice sound at once so sweet and full—never did his manner become so impressive in its noble simplicity, as when he delivered the oracles of God: and

tonight that voice took a more solemn tone—that manner a more thrilling meaning—as he sat in the midst of his household circle (the May moon shining in through the uncurtained window, and rendering almost unnecessary the light of the candle on the table): as he sat there, bending over the great old Bible, and described from its page the vision of the new heaven and the new earth—told how God would come to dwell with men, how he would wipe away all tears from their eyes, and promised that there should be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, nor any more pain, because the former things were passed away.

The succeeding words thrilled me strangely as he spoke them: especially as I felt, by the slight, indescribable alteration in sound, that in uttering them, his eye had turned on me.

"He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But," was slowly, distinctly read, "the fearful, the unbelieving, etc., shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

Henceforward, I knew what fate St. John feared for me.

A calm, subdued triumph, blended with a longing earnestness, marked his enunciation of the last glorious verses of that chapter. The reader believed his name was already written in the Lamb's book of life, and he yearned after the hour which should admit him to the city to which the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor; which has no need of sun or moon to shine in it, because the glory of God lightens it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

In the prayer following the chapter, all his energy gathered, all his stern zeal woke: he was in deep earnest, wrestling with God, and resolved on a conquest. He supplicated strength for the weak-hearted; guidance for wanderers from the fold: a return, even at the eleventh hour, for those whom the temptations of the world and the flesh were luring from the narrow path. He asked, he urged, he claimed the boon of a brand snatched from the burning. Earnestness is ever deeply solemn: first, as I listened to that prayer, I wondered at his; then, when it continued and rose, I was touched by it, and at last awed. He felt the greatness and goodness of his purpose so sincerely: others who heard him plead for it, could not but feel it too.

The prayer over, we took leave of him: he was to go at a very early hour in the morning. Diana and Mary having kissed him, left the room—in compliance, I think, with a whispered hint from him: I tendered my hand, and wished him a pleasant journey.

"Thank you, Jane. As I said, I shall return from Cambridge in a fortnight: that space, then, is yet left you for reflection. If I listened to human pride, I should say no more to you of marriage with me; but I listen to my duty, and keep steadily in view my first aim—to do all things to the glory of God. My Master was long-suffering: so will I be. I cannot give you up to perdition as a vessel of wrath: repent—resolve—while there is yet time. Remember, we are bid to work while it is day—warned that 'the night cometh when no man shall work.' Remember the fate of Dives, who had his good things in this life. God give you strength to choose that better part which shall not be taken from you!"

He laid his hand on my head as he uttered the last words. He had spoken earnestly, mildly: his look was not, indeed, that of a lover beholding his mistress; but it was that of a pastor recalling his wandering sheep-or better, of a guardian angel watching the soul for which he is responsible. All men of talent, whether they be men of feeling or not; whether they be zealots, or aspirants, or despots-provided only they be sincere—have their sublime moments: when they subdue and rule. I felt veneration for St. John—veneration so strong that its impetus thrust me at once to the point I had so long shunned. I was tempted to cease struggling with him—to rush down the torrent of his will into the gulf of his existence, and there lose my own. I was almost as hard beset by him now as I had been once before, in a different way, by another. I was a fool both times. To have yielded then would have been an error of principle; to have yielded now would have been an error of judgment. So I think at this hour, when I look back to the crisis through the quiet medium of time: I was unconscious of folly at the instant.

I stood motionless under my hierophant's touch. My refusals were forgotten—my fears overcome—my wrestlings paralyzed. The Impossible—i.e., my marriage with St. John—was fast becoming the Possible. All was changing utterly, with a sudden sweep. Religion called—Angels beckoned—God commanded—life rolled together like a scroll—death's gates opening, showed eternity beyond: it seemed, that for safety and bliss there, all here might be sacrificed in a second. The dim room was full of visions.

"Could you decide now?" asked the missionary. The inquiry was put in gentle tones: he drew me to him gently. Oh, that gentleness! how far more potent is it than force! I could resist St. John's wrath: I grew pliant as a reed under his kindness. Yet I knew all the time,

if I yielded now, I should not the less be made to repent, some day, of my former rebellion. His nature was not changed by one hour of solemn prayer: it was only elevated.

"I could decide if I were but certain," I answered: "were I but convinced that it is God's will I should marry you, I could vow to marry you here and now—come afterward what would!"

"My prayers are heard!" ejaculated St. John. He pressed his hand firmer on my head, as if he claimed me: he surrounded me with his arm, almost as if he loved me (I say almost—I knew the difference—for I had felt what it was to be loved; but, like him, I had now put love out of the question, and thought only of duty): I contended with my inward dimness of vision, before which clouds yet rolled. I sincerely, deeply, fervently longed to do what was right; and only that. "Show me, show me the path!" I entreated of Heaven. I was excited more than I had ever been; and whether what followed was the effect of excitement, the reader shall judge.

All the house was still; for I believe all, except St. John and myself, were now retired to rest. The one candle was dying out: the room was full of moonlight. My heart beat fast and thick: I heard its throb. Suddenly it stood still to an inexpressible feeling that thrilled it through, and passed at once to my head and extremities. The feeling was not like an electric shock; but it was quite as sharp, as strange, as startling: it acted on my senses as if their utmost activity hitherto had been but torpor; from which they were now summoned, and forced to wake. They rose expectant: eye and ear waited, while the flesh quivered on my bones.

"What have you heard? What do you see?" asked St. John. I saw nothing: but I heard a voice somewhere cry—

"Jane! Jane!" nothing more.

"Oh God! what is it?" I gasped.

I might have said, "Where is it?" for it did not seem in the room—nor in the house—nor in the garden: it did not come out of the air—nor from under the earth—nor from overhead. I had heard it—where, or whence, for ever impossible to know! And it was the voice of a human being—a known, loved, well-remembered voice—that of Edward Fairfax Rochester; and it spoke in pain and woe wildly, eerily, urgently.

"I am coming!" I cried. "Wait for me! Oh, I will come!" I flew to the door, and looked into the passage: it was dark. I ran out into the garden: it was void.

"Where are you?" I exclaimed.

The hills beyond Marsh Glen sent the answer faintly back—"Where are you?" I listened. The wind sighed low in the firs: all was moorland loneliness and midnight hush.

"Down superstition!" I commented, as that specter rose up black by the black yew at the gate. "This is not thy deception, not thy witchcraft: it is the work of nature. She was roused, and did—no miracle—but her best."

I broke from St. John, who had followed, and would have detained me. It was my time to assume ascendancy. My powers were in play, and in force. I told him to forbear question or remark; I desired him to leave me: I must, and would be alone. He obeyed at once. Where there is energy to command well enough, obedience never fails. I mounted to my chamber; locked myself in; fell on my knees; and prayed in my way—a different way to St. John's, but effective in its own fashion. I seemed to penetrate very near a Mighty Spirit; and my soul rushed out in gratitude at His feet. I rose from the thanksgiving—took a resolve—and lay down, unscared, enlightened—eager but for the daylight.

CHAPTER 36

[Jane rose the next morning at dawn, her mind made up to return to Millcote in search of news of Mr. Rochester. St. John left the house before breakfast, having slipped under Jane's door a written exhortation that she avoid temptation. Jane informed Diana and Mary she would be gone four days, and in mid-afternoon took a seat in the coach that one year earlier had set her down, penniless, at Whitcross. At the Rochester Inn thirty-six hours later Jane left the coach and struck out across the fields, impatient to see Thornfield Hall once more.]

I looked with timorous joy toward a stately house: I saw a blackened ruin.

No need to cower behind a gate-post, indeed!—to peep up at chamber lattices, fearing life was astir behind them! No need to listen for doors opening—to fancy steps on the pavement or the gravel-walk!

The lawn, the grounds were trodden and waste: the portal yawned void. The front was, as I had once seen it in a dream, but a shell-like wall, very high and very fragile looking, perforated with paneless windows: no roof, no battlements, no chimneys—all had crashed in.

And there was the silence of death about it: the solitude of a lone-some wild. No wonder that letters addressed to people here had never received an answer. . . .

The grim blackness of the stones told by what fate the Hall had fallen—by conflagration: but how kindled? What story belonged to this disaster? . . .

In wandering round the shattered walls and through the devastated interior, I gathered evidence that the calamity was not of late occurrence. Winter snows, I thought, had drifted through that void arch; winter rains beaten in at those hollow casements; for, amid the drenched piles of rubbish, spring had cherished vegetation: grass and weed grew here and there between the stones and fallen rafters.

[Jane returned to the inn.]

The host himself brought my breakfast into the parlor. I requested him to shut the door and sit down: I had some questions to ask him. But when he complied, I scarcely knew how to begin; such horror had I of the possible answers. And yet the spectacle of desolation I had just left, prepared me in a measure for a tale of misery. The host was a respectable-looking, middle-aged man.

"You know Thornfield Hall, of course?" I managed to say at last.

"Yes, ma'am; I lived there once."

"Did you?"

"I was the late Mr. Rochester's butler," he added.

The late! I seemed to have received with full force, the blow I had been trying to evade.

"The late!" I gasped. "Is he dead?"

"I mean the present gentleman, Mr. Edward's father," he explained. I breathed again: my blood resumed its flow. . . .

"Is Mr. Rochester living at Thornfield now?" I asked, knowing, of course, what the answer would be, but yet desirous of deferring the direct question as to where he really was.

"No, ma'am. . . . Thornfield Hall is quite a ruin: it was burned down just about harvest time. A dreadful calamity! such an immense quantity of valuable property destroyed: hardly any of the furniture

could be saved. The fire broke out at dead of night, and before the engines arrived from Millcote, the building was one mass of flame. It was a terrible spectacle: I witnessed it myself."

"At dead of night!" I muttered. Yes, that was ever the hour of fatality at Thornfield. "Was it known how it originated?" I demanded.

"They guessed, ma'am: they guessed. Indeed, I should say it was ascertained beyond a doubt. You are not perhaps aware," he continued, edging his chair a little nearer the table, and speaking low, "that there was a lady,—a—a lunatic, kept in the house?"

"I have heard something of it."

"She was kept in very close confinement, ma'am; people even for years was not absolutely certain of her existence. No one saw her: they only knew by rumor that such a person was at the Hall; and who or what she was it was difficult to conjecture. They said Mr. Edward had brought her from abroad; and some believed she had been his mistress. But a queer thing happened a year since—a very queer thing."

I feared now to hear my own story. I endeavored to recall him to the main fact.

"And this lady?"

"This lady, ma'am," he answered, "turned out to be Mr. Rochester's wife! The discovery was brought about in the strangest way. There was a young lady, a governess at the Hall, that Mr. Rochester fell in—"

"But the fire," I suggested.

"I'm coming to that, ma'am—that Mr. Edward fell in love with. The servants say they never saw anybody so much in love as he was: he was after her continually. They used to watch him—servants will, you know, ma'am—and he set store on her past everything: for all, nobody but him thought her so very handsome. She was a little small thing, they say, almost like a child. I never saw her myself; but I've heard Leah, the housemaid, tell of her. Leah liked her well enough. Mr. Rochester was about forty, and this governess not twenty; and you see, when gentlemen of his age fall in love with girls, they are often like as if they were bewitched: well, he would marry her."

"You shall tell me this part of the story another time," I said; "but now I have a particular reason for wishing to hear all about the fire. Was it suspected that this lunatic, Mrs. Rochester, had any hand in it?"

"You've hit it, ma'am: it's quite certain that it was her and nobody

but her, that set it going. She had a woman to take care of her called Mrs. Poole—an able woman in her line, and very trustworthy, but for one fault—a fault common to a deal of them nurses and matrons -she kept a private bottle of gin by her, and now and then took a drop over much. It is excusable, for she had a hard life of it: but still it was dangerous; for when Mrs. Poole was fast asleep, after the gin and water, the mad lady, who was as cunning as a witch, would take the keys out of her pocket, let herself out of her chamber, and go roaming about the house, doing any wild mischief that came into her head. They say she had nearly burned her husband in his bed once: but I don't know about that. However, on this night, she set fire first to the hangings of the room next to her own; and then she got down to a lower story, and made her way to the chamber that had been the governess's (she was like as if she knew somehow how matters had gone on, and had a spite at her)—and she kindled the bed there; but there was nobody sleeping in it fortunately. The governess had run away two months before; and for all Mr. Rochester sought her as if she had been the most precious thing he had in the world, he never could hear a word of her; and he grew savage—quite savage on his disappointment: he never was a wild man, but he got dangerous after he lost her. He would be alone, too. He sent Mrs. Fairfax, the housekeeper, away to her friends at a distance; but he did it handsomely, for he settled an annuity on her for life: and she deserved it—she was a very good woman. Miss Adèle, a ward he had, was put to school. He broke off acquaintance with all the gentry, and shut himself up, like a hermit, at the Hall."

"What! did he not leave England?"

"Leave England? Bless you, no! He would not cross the doorstones of the house; except at night, when he walked just like a ghost about the grounds and in the orchard as if he had lost his senses—which it is my opinion he had; for a more spirited, bolder, keener gentleman than he was before that midge of a governess crossed him, you never saw, ma'am. He was not a man given to wine, or cards, or racing, as some are, and he was not so very handsome; but he had a courage and a will of his own, if ever man had. I knew him from a boy, you see: and for my part I have often wished that Miss Eyre had been sunk in the sea before she came to Thornfield Hall."

"Then Mr. Rochester was at home when the fire broke out?"

"Yes, indeed was he; and he went up to the attics when all was burning above and below, and got the servants out of their beds and

helped them down himself—and went back to get his mad wife out of her cell. And then they called out to him that she was on the roof; where she was standing, waving her arms, above the battlements, and shouting out till they could hear her a mile off: I saw her and heard her with my own eyes. She was a big woman, and had long, black hair: we could see it streaming against the flames as she stood. I witnessed, and several more witnessed Mr. Rochester ascend through the skylight on to the roof: we heard him call 'Bertha!' We saw him approach her; and then, ma'am, she yelled, and gave a spring, and the next minute she lay smashed on the pavement."

"Dead?"

"Dead? Ay, dead as the stones on which her brains and blood were scattered."

"Good God!"

"You may well say so, ma'am: it was frightful!"

He shuddered.

"And afterward?" I urged.

"Well, ma'am, afterward the house was burned to the ground: there are only some bits of walls standing now."

"Were any other lives lost?"

"No-perhaps it would have been better if there had."

"What do you mean?"

"Poor Mr. Edward!" he ejaculated, "I little thought ever to have seen it! Some say it was a just judgment on him for keeping his first marriage secret, and wanting to take another wife while he had one living: but I pity him, for my part."

"You said he was alive?" I exclaimed.

"Yes, yes: he is alive; but many think he had better be dead."

"Why? How?" My blood was again running cold.

"Where is he?" I demanded. "Is he in England?"

"Ay—ay—he's in England; he can't get out of England, I fancy—he's a fixture now."

What agony was this! And the man seemed resolved to protract it. "He is stone-blind," he said at last. "Yes—he is stone-blind—is Mr. Edward."

I had dreaded worse. I had dreaded he was mad. I summoned strength to ask what had caused this calamity.

"It was all his own courage, and a body may say, his kindness, in a way, ma'am: he wouldn't leave the house till everyone else was out before him. As he came down the great staircase at last, after Mrs. Rochester had flung herself from the battlements, there was a great crash—all fell. He was taken out from under the ruins, alive, but sadly hurt: a beam had fallen in such a way as to protect him partly; but one eye was knocked out, and one hand so crushed that Mr. Carter, the surgeon, had to amputate it directly. The other eye inflamed: he lost the sight of that also. He is now helpless, indeed—blind and a cripple."

"Where is he? Where does he now live?"

"At Ferndean, a manor-house on a farm he has, about thirty miles off: quite a desolate spot."

"Who is with him?"

"Old John and his wife: he would have none else. He is quite broken down, they say."

"Have you any sort of conveyance?"

"We have a chaise, ma'am, a very handsome chaise."

"Let it be got ready instantly; and if your post-boy can drive me to Ferndean before dark this day, I'll pay both you and him twice the hire you usually demand."

CHAPTER 37

[Jane arrived at the manor just before dark, having walked the last mile in the rain. It was a lonely structure, deeply buried in its woods. As Jane gazed at the desolate house, wondering if it could contain any life, the narrow front door began to open.]

It opened slowly; a figure came out into the twilight and stood on the step; a man without a hat: he stretched forth his hand as if to feel whether it rained. Dusk as it was, I had recognized him—it was my master, Edward Fairfax Rochester, and no other.

I stayed my step, almost my breath, and stood to watch him—to examine him, myself unseen, and alas! to him invisible. It was a sudden meeting, and one in which rapture was kept well in check by pain. I had no difficulty in restraining my voice from exclamation, my step from hasty advance.

His form was of the same strong and stalwart contour as ever: his port was still erect, his hair was still raven-black; nor were his features

altered or sunk: not in one year's space, by any sorrow, could his athletic strength be quelled, or his vigorous prime blighted. But in his countenance, I saw a change: that looked desperate and brooding—that reminded me of some wronged and fettered wild beast or bird, dangerous to approach in his sullen woe. The caged eagle, whose gold-ringed eyes cruelty has extinguished, might look as looked that sightless Samson.

[Jane watched John, the servant, offer his arm to Mr. Rochester, who was stumbling about, and heard the brusque refusal he had for answer.]

I now drew near and knocked: John's wife opened for me. "Mary," I said, "how are you?"

She started as if she had seen a ghost: I calmed her. To her hurried "Is it really you, Miss, come at this late hour to this 'only place?" I answered by taking her hand; and then I followed her into the kitchen, where John now sat by a good fire. I explained to them, in a few words, that I had heard all which had happened since I left Thornfield, and that I was come to see Mr. Rochester. I asked John to go down to the turnpike-house, where I had dismissed the chaise, and bring my trunk, which I had left there: and then, while I removed my bonnet and shawl, I questioned Mary as to whether I could be accommodated at the Manor House for the night; and finding that arrangements to that effect, though difficult, would not be impossible, I informed her I should stay. Just at this moment the parlor-bell rang.

"When you go in," said I, "tell your master that a person wishes to speak to him, but do not give my name."

"I don't think he will see you," she answered; "he refuses everybody."

When she returned, I inquired what he had said.

"You are to send in your name and your business," she replied. She then proceeded to fill a glass with water, and place it on a tray, together with candles.

"Is that what he rang for?" I asked.

"Yes: he always has candles brought in at dark, though he is blind."

"Give the tray to me, I will carry it in."

I took it from her hand: she pointed me out the parlor door. The

tray shook as I held it; the water spilled from the glass; my heart struck my ribs loud and fast. Mary opened the door for me, and shut it behind me.

This parlor looked gloomy: a neglected handful of fire burned low in the grate; and, leaning over it, with his head supported against the high, old-fashioned mantelpiece, appeared the blind tenant of the room. His old dog, Pilot, lay on one side, removed out of the way, and coiled up as if afraid of being inadvertently trodden upon. Pilot pricked up his ears when I came in: then he jumped up with a yelp and a whine, and bounded toward me: he almost knocked the tray from my hands. I set it on the table; then patted him, and said softly, "Lie down!" Mr. Rochester turned mechanically to see what the commotion was: but as he saw nothing, he returned and sighed.

"Give me the water, Mary," he said.

I approached him with the now only half-filled glass. Pilot followed me, still excited.

"What is the matter?" he inquired.

"Down, Pilot!" I again said. He checked the water on its way to his lips, and seemed to listen: he drank, and put the glass down. "This is you, Mary, is it not?"

"Mary is in the kitchen," I answered.

He put out his hand with a quick gesture, but not seeing where I stood, he did not touch me. "Who is this? Who is this?" he demanded, trying, as it seemed, to see with those sightless eyes—unavailing and distressing attempt! "Answer me—speak again!" he ordered, imperiously and aloud.

"Will you have a little more water, sir? I spilled half of what was in the glass," I said.

"Who is it? What is it? Who speaks?"

"Pilot knows me, and John and Mary know I am here. I came only this evening," I answered.

"Great God!—what delusion has come over me? What sweet madness has seized me?"

"No delusion—no madness: your mind, sir, is too strong for delusion, your health too sound for frenzy."

"And where is the speaker? Is it only a voice? Oh! I cannot see, but I must feel, or my heart will stop and my brain burst. Whatever—whoever you are—be perceptible to the touch or I cannot live!"

He groped; I arrested his wandering hand, and prisoned it in both mine.

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"Her very fingers!" he cried; "her small, slight fingers! If so, there must be more of her!"

The muscular hand broke from my custody; my arm was seized, my shoulder—neck—waist—I was entwined and gathered to him.

"Is it Jane? What is it? This is her shape—this is her size—"

"And this her voice," I added. "She is all here: her heart, too. God bless you, sir! I am glad to be so near you again."

"Jane Eyre—Jane Eyre," was all he said.

"My dear master," I answered, "I am Jane Eyre: I have found you out—I am come back to you."

"In truth—in the flesh? My living Jane?"

"You touch me, sir, you hold me, and fast enough: I am not like a corpse, nor vacant like air, am I?"

"My living darling! These are certainly her limbs, and these her features; but I cannot be so blessed, after all my misery. It is a dream; such dreams as I have had at night when I have clasped her once more to my heart, as I do now; and kissed her, as thus—and felt that she loved me, and trusted that she would not leave me."

"Which I never will, sir, from this day."

"Never will, says the vision? But I always woke and found it an empty mockery; and I was desolate and abandoned—my life dark, lonely, hopeless—my soul athirst and forbidden to drink—my heart famished and never to be fed. Gentle, soft dream, nestling in my arms now, you will fly, too, as your sisters have all fled before you: but kiss me before you go—embrace me, Jane."

"There, sir-and there!"

I pressed my lips to his once brilliant and now rayless eyes—I swept his hair from his brow, and kissed that too. He suddenly seemed to arouse himself: the conviction of the reality of all this seized him.

"It is you—is it, Jane? You are come back to me, then?"

"And you do not lie dead in some ditch under some stream? And you are not a pining outcast among strangers?"

"No, sir; I am an independent woman now."

"Independent! What do you mean, Jane?"

"My uncle in Madeira is dead, and he left me five thousand pounds."

"Ah, this is practical—this is real!" he cried: "I should never dream that. Besides, there is that peculiar voice of hers, so animating

and piquant, as well as soft: it cheers my withered heart; it puts life into it.—What, Janet! Are you an independent woman? A rich woman?"

"Quite rich, sir. If you won't let me live with you, I can build a house of my own close up to your door, and you may come and sit in my parlor when you want company of an evening."

"But as you are rich, Jane, you have now, no doubt, friends who will look after you, and not suffer you to devote yourself to a blind lameter * like me?"

"I told you I am independent, sir, as well as rich: I am my own mistress."

"And you will stay with me?"

"Certainly—unless you object. I will be your neighbor, your nurse, your housekeeper. I find you lonely: I will be your companion—to read to you, to walk with you, to sit with you, to wait on you, to be eyes and hands to you. Cease to look so melancholy, my dear master; you shall not be left desolate, so long as I live."

He replied not: he seemed serious—abstracted; he sighed; he half-opened his lips as if to speak: he closed them again. I felt a little embarrassed. Perhaps I had too rashly overleaped conventionalities; and he, like St. John, saw impropriety in my inconsiderateness. I had indeed made my proposal from the idea that he wished and would ask me to be his wife: an expectation, not the less certain because unexpressed, had buoyed me up, that he would claim me at once as his own. But no hint to that effect escaping him and his countenance becoming more overcast, I suddenly remembered that I might have been all wrong, and was perhaps playing the fool unwittingly; and I began gently to withdraw myself from his arms—but he eagerly snatched me closer.

"No—no—Jane; you must not go. No—I have touched you, heard you, felt the comfort of your presence—the sweetness of your consolation: I cannot give up these joys. I have little left in myself—I must have you. The world may laugh—may call me absurd, selfish—but it does not signify. My very soul demands you: it will be satisfied: or it will take deadly vengeance on its frame."

"Well, sir, I will stay with you: I have said so."

"Yes—but you understand one thing by staying with me: and I understand another. You, perhaps, could make up your mind to be about my hand and chair—to wait on me as a kind little nurse (for

^{*} Cripple

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you have an affectionate heart and a generous spirit, which prompt you to make sacrifices for those you pity), and that ought to suffice for me no doubt. I suppose I should now entertain none but fatherly feelings for you: do you think so? Come—tell me."

"I will think what you like, sir: I am content to be only your nurse, if you think it better."

"But you cannot always be my nurse, Janet: you are young—you must marry one day."

"I don't care about being married."

"You should care, Janet: if I were what I once was, I would try to make you care—but—a sightless block!"

He relapsed again into gloom. I, on the contrary, became more cheerful, and took fresh courage: these last words gave me an insight as to where the difficulty lay; and as it was no difficulty with me, I felt quite relieved from my previous embarrassment. I resumed a livelier vein of conversation.

"It is time some one undertook to rehumanize you," said I, parting his thick and long uncut locks; "for I see you are being metamorphosed into a lion, or something of that sort. You have a 'faux air' of Nebuchadnezzar in the fields about you, that is certain: your hair reminds me of eagles' feathers; whether your nails are grown like birds' claws or not, I have not yet noticed."

"On this arm, I have neither hand nor nails," he said, drawing the mutilated limb from his breast, and showing it to me. "It is a mere stump—a ghastly sight! Don't you think so, Jane?"

"It is a pity to see it; and a pity to see your eyes—and the scar of fire on your forehead: and the worst of it is, one is in danger of loving you too well for all this; and making too much of you."

"I thought you would be revolted, Jane, when you saw my arm, and my cicatrized visage."

"Did you? Don't tell me so—lest I should say something disparaging to your judgment. Now, let me leave you an instant, to make a better fire, and have the hearth swept up. Can you tell when there is a good fire?"

"Yes; with the right eye I see a glow—a ruddy haze."

"And you see the candles?"

"Very dimly-each is a luminous cloud."

"Can you see me?"

"No, my fairy: but I am only too thankful to hear and feel you."

"When do you take supper?"

"I never take supper."

"But you shall have some tonight. I am hungry: so are you, I daresay, only you forget."

Summoning Mary, I soon had the room in more cheerful order: I prepared him, likewise, a comfortable repast. My spirits were excited, and with pleasure and ease I talked to him during supper, and for a long time after. There was no harassing restraint, no repressing of glee and vivacity with him; for with him I was at perfect ease, because I knew I suited him: all I said or did seemed either to console or revive him. Delightful consciousness! It brought to life and light my whole nature: in his presence I thoroughly lived; and he lived in mine. Blind as he was, smiles played over his face, joy dawned on his forehead: his lineaments softened and warmed.

After supper, he began to ask me many questions, of where I had been, what I had been doing, how I had found him out; but I gave him only very partial replies: it was too late to enter into particulars that night. Besides, I wished to touch no deep-thrilling chord—to open no fresh well of emotion in his heart: my sole present aim was to cheer him. Cheered, as I have said, he was: and yet but by fits. If a moment's silence broke the conversation, he would turn restless, touch me, then say, "Jane."

"You are altogether a human being, Jane? You are certain of that?"

"I conscientiously believe so, Mr. Rochester."

[When, the following morning, Jane began to answer Mr. Rochester's impatient questions about her year of absence, she made light of the days of wandering and starvation. To rouse him from the melancholy that had gnawed on him so long, Jane deliberately elicited Mr. Rochester's jealousy by praising St. John Rivers. When she summed up her cousin's physical attributes as resembling those of Apollo, Mr. Rochester told her to leave him, and immediately plunged into even more detailed questions about the life at Moor House. Jane proceeded to describe the lessons in Hindustani, St. John's missionary plans, and finally, his proposal of marriage to her.]

"Miss Eyre, I repeat it, you can leave me. How often am I to say the same thing? Why do you remain pertinaciously perched on my knee, when I have given you notice to quit?"

"Because I am comfortable there."

JANE EYRE

"No, Jane, you are not comfortable there, because your heart is not with me: it is with this cousin—this St. John. Oh, till this moment, I thought my little Jane was all mine! I had a belief she loved me even when she left me: that was an atom of sweet in much bitter. Long as we have been parted, hot tears as I have wept over our separation, I never thought that while I was mourning her, she was loving another! But it is useless grieving. Jane, leave me: go and marry Rivers."

"Shake me off, then, sir—push me away, for I'll not leave you of my own accord."

"Jane, I ever like your tone of voice: it still renews hope, it sounds so truthful. When I hear it, it carries me back a year. I forget that you have formed a new tie. But I am not a fool—go—"

"Where must I go, sir?"

"Your own way-with the husband you have chosen."

"Who is that?"

"You know-St. John Rivers."

"He is not my husband, nor ever will be. He does not love me: I do not love him. He loves (as he can love, and that is not as you love) a beautiful young lady called Rosamond. He wanted to marry me only because he thought I should make a suitable missionary's wife, which she would not have done. He is good and great, but severe; and, for me, cold as an iceberg. He is not like you, sir: I am not happy at his side, nor near him, nor with him. He has no indulgence for me—no fondness. He sees nothing attractive in me; not even youth—only a few useful mental points. Then I must leave you, sir, to go to him?"

I shuddered involuntarily, and clung instinctively closer to my blind but beloved master. He smiled.

"What, Jane! Is this true? Is such really the state of matters between you and Rivers?"

"Absolutely, sir. Oh, you need not be jealous! I wanted to tease you a little to make you less sad: I thought anger would be better than grief. But if you wish me to love you, could you but see how much I do love you, you would be proud and content. All my heart is yours, sir: it belongs to you; and with you it would remain, were fate to exile the rest of me from your presence for ever."

Again, as he kissed me, painful thoughts darkened his aspect.

"My seared vision! My crippled strength!" he murmured regretfully.

I caressed, in order to soothe him. I knew of what he was thinking,

and wanted to speak for him; but dared not. As he turned aside his face a minute, I saw a tear slide from under the sealed eyelid, and trickle down the manly cheek. My heart swelled.

"I am no better than the old lightning-struck chestnut-tree in Thornfield orchard," he remarked, ere long. "And what right would that ruin have to bid a budding woodbine cover its decay with freshness?"

"You are no ruin, sir—no lightning-struck tree: you are green and vigorous. Plants will grow about your roots, whether you ask them or not, because they take delight in your bountiful shadow; and as they grow they will lean toward you, and wind round you, because your strength offers them so safe a prop."

Again he smiled: I gave him comfort.

"You speak of friends, Jane?" he asked.

"Yes; of friends," I answered, rather hesitatingly: for I knew I meant more than friends, but could not tell what other word to employ. He helped me!

"Ah! Jane. But I want a wife."

"Do you, sir?"

"Yes: is it news to you?"

"Oh course: you said nothing about it before."

"Is it unwelcome news?"

"That depends on circumstances, sir—on your choice."

"Which you shall make for me, Jane. I will abide by your decision."

"Choose then, sir-her who loves you best."

"I will at least choose—her I love best. Jane, will you marry me?" "Yes, sir."

"A poor blind man, whom you will have to lead about by the hand?"

"Yes, sir."

"A crippled man, twenty years older than you, whom you will have to wait on?"

"Yes, sir."

"Truly, Jane?"

"Most truly, sir."

"Oh! my darling! God bless and reward you!"

"Mr. Rochester, if ever I did a good deed in my life—if ever I thought a good thought—if ever I prayed a sincere and blameless prayer—if ever I wished a righteous wish—I am rewarded now. To be your wife is, for me, to be as happy as I can be on earth."

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"Because you delight in sacrifice."

"Sacrifice! What do I sacrifice? Famine for food, expectation for content. To be privileged to put my arms round what I value—to press my lips to what I love—to repose on what I trust: is that to make a sacrifice? If so, then certainly I delight in sacrifice."

"And to bear with my infirmities, Jane: to overlook my deficiencies."

"Which are none, sir, to me. I love you better now, when I can really be useful to you, than I did in your state of proud independence, when you disdained every part but that of the giver and protector."

"Hitherto I have hated to be helped—to be led: henceforth, I feel, I shall hate it no more. I did not like to put my hand into a hireling's, but it is pleasant to feel it circled by Jane's little fingers. I preferred utter loneliness to the constant attendance of servants; but Jane's soft ministry will be a perpetual joy. Jane suits me: do I suit her?"

"To the finest fiber of my nature, sir."

"The case being so, we have nothing in the world to wait for: we must be married instantly."

He looked and spoke with eagerness: his old impetuosity was rising.

"We must become one flesh without any delay, Jane: there is but the license to get—then we marry."

"Mr. Rochester, I have just discovered the sun is far declined from its meridian, and Pilot is actually gone home to his dinner. Let me look at your watch."

"Fasten it into your girdle, Janet, and keep it henceforward: I have no use for it."

"It is nearly four o'clock in the afternoon, sir. Don't you feel hungry?"

"The third day from this must be our wedding-day, Jane. Never mind fine clothes and jewels, now: all that is not worth a fillip."

"The sun has dried up all the rain-drops, sir. The breeze is still: it is quite hot."

"Do you know, Jane, I have your little pearl necklace at this moment fastened round my bronze scrag under my cravat? I have worn it since the day I lost my only treasure: as a memento of her."

"We will go home through the wood: that will be the shadiest way." He pursued his own thoughts without heeding me.

"Jane! you think me, I daresay, an irreligious dog: but my heart swells with gratitude to the beneficent God of this earth just now He sees not as man sees, but far clearer: judges not as man judges, but far more wisely. I did wrong: I would have sullied my innocent flower—breathed guilt on its purity: the Omnipotent snatched it from me. I, in my stiff-necked rebellion, almost cursed the dispensation: instead of bending to the decree, I defied it. Divine justice pursued its course; disasters came thick on me: I was forced to pass through the valley of the shadow of death. His chastisements are mighty; and one smote me which has humbled me for ever. You know I was proud of my strength: but what is it now, when I must give it over to foreign guidance, as a child does its weakness? Of late, Jane—only—only of late—I began to see and acknowledge the hand of God in my doom. I began to experience remorse, repentance; the wish for reconcilement to my Maker. I began sometimes to pray: very brief prayers they were, but very sincere.

"Some days since: nay, I can number them—four; it was last Monday night, a singular mood came over me: one in which grief replaced frenzy—sorrow, sullenness. I had long had the impression that since I could nowhere find you, you must be dead. Late that night—perhaps it might be between eleven and twelve o'clock—ere I retired to my dreary rest, I supplicated God, that, if it seemed good to Him, I might soon be taken from this life, and admitted to that world to come, where there was still hope of rejoining Jane.

"I was in my own room, and sitting by the window, which was open: it soothed me to feel the balmy night-air; though I could see no stars, and only by a vague, luminous haze, knew the presence of a moon. I longed for thee, Janet! Oh, I longed for thee both with soul and flesh! I asked of God, at once in anguish and humility, if I had not been long enough desolate, afflicted, tormented; and might not soon taste bliss and peace once more. That I merited all I endured, I acknowledged—that I could scarcely endure more, I pleaded; and the alpha and omega of my heart's wishes broke involuntarily from my lips in the words—'Jane! Jane! Jane!"

"Did you speak these words aloud?"

"I did, Jane. If any listener had heard me, he would have thought me mad: I pronounced them with such frantic energy."

"And it was last Monday night: somewhere near midnight?"

"Yes; but the time is of no consequence: what followed is the strange point. You will think me superstitious—some superstition I have in my blood, and always had: nevertheless, this is true—true at least it is that I heard what I now relate.

JANE EYRE

"As I exclaimed 'Jane! Jane! Jane!' a voice—I cannot tell whence the voice came, but I know whose voice it was—replied, 'I am coming: wait for me'; and a moment after, went whispering on the wind, the words—'Where are you?'

"I'll tell you, if I can, the idea, the picture these words opened to my mind: yet it is difficult to express what I want to express. Ferndean is buried, as you see, in a heavy wood, where sound falls dull, and dies unreverberating. 'Where are you?' seemed spoken among mountains; for I heard a hill-sent echo repeat the words. Cooler and fresher at the moment the gale seemed to visit my brow: I could have deemed that in some wild, lone scene, I and Jane were meeting. In spirit, I believe we must have met. You no doubt were, at that hour, in unconscious sleep, Jane: perhaps your soul wandered from its cell to comfort mine; for those were your accents—as certain as I live—they were yours!"

It was on Monday night—near midnight—that I too had received the mysterious summons: those were the very words by which I replied to it. I listened to Mr. Rochester's narrative; but made no disclosure in return. The coincidence struck me as too awful and inexplicable to be communicated or discussed. If I told anything, my tale would be such as must necessarily make a profound impression on the mind of my hearer: and that mind, yet from its sufferings too prone to gloom, needed not the deeper shade of the supernatural. I kept these things then, and pondered them in my heart.

"You cannot now wonder," continued my master, "that when you rose upon me so unexpectedly last night, I had difficulty in believing you any other than a mere voice and vision: something that would melt to silence and annihilation, as the midnight whisper and mountain echo had melted before. Now, I thank God! I knew it to be otherwise. Yes, I thank God!"

He put me off his knee, rose, and reverently lifting his hat from his brow, and bending his sightless eyes to the earth, he stood in mute devotion. Only the last words of the worship were audible.

"I thank my Maker, that in the midst of judgment he has remembered mercy. I humbly entreat my Redeemer to give me strength to lead henceforth a purer life than I have done hitherto!"

Then he stretched his hand out to be led. I took that dear hand, held it a moment to my lips, then let it pass round my shoulder: being so much lower of stature than he, I served both for his prop and guide. We entered the wood, and wended homeward.

CHAPTER 38

CONCLUSION

A QUIET WEDDING WE HAD: he and I, the parson and clerk, were alone present. When we got back from church, I went into the kitchen of the manor-house, where Mary was cooking the dinner, and John cleaning the knives, and I said:

"Mary, I have been married to Mr. Rochester this morning." The housekeeper and her husband were both of that decent phlegmatic order of people, to whom one may at any time safely communicate a remarkable piece of news without incurring the danger of having one's ears pierced by some shrill ejaculation, and subsequently stunned by a torrent of wordy wonderment. Mary did look up, and she did stare at me: the ladle with which she was basting a pair of chickens roasting at the fire, did for some three minutes hang suspended in the air; and for the same space of time John's knives also had a rest from the polishing process: but Mary, bending again over the roast, said only—

"Have you, Miss? Well, for sure!"

A short time after she pursued: "I seed you go out with the master, but I didn't know you were gone to church to be wed"; and she basted away. John, when I turned to him, was grinning from ear to ear.

"I telled Mary how it would be," he said: "I knew what Mr. Edward" (John was an old servant, and had known his master when he was the cadet of the house, therefore, he often gave him his Christian name)—"I knew what Mr. Edward would do; and I was certain he would not wait long neither: and he's done right, for aught I know. I wish you joy, Miss!" and he politely pulled his forelock.

"Thank you, John. Mr. Rochester told me to give you and Mary this." I put into his hand a five-pound note. Without waiting to hear more, I left the kitchen. In passing the door of that sanctum some time after, I caught the words,

"She'll happen do better for him nor ony o' t' grand ladies." And again, "If she ben't one o' th' handsomest, she's noan faâl and varry

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good-natured; and i' his een she's fair beautiful, onybody may see that."

I wrote to Moor House and to Cambridge immediately, to say what I had done: fully explaining also why I had thus acted. Diana and Mary approved the step unreservedly. Diana announced that she would just give me time to get over the honeymoon, and then she would come and see me.

"She had better not wait till then, Jane," said Mr. Rochester, when I read her letter to him; "if she does, she will be too late, for our honeymoon will shine our lifelong: its beams will only fade over your grave or mine."

How St. John received the news, I don't know; he never answered the letter in which I communicated it: yet six months after he wrote to me, without, however, mentioning Mr. Rochester's name, or alluding to my marriage. His letter was then calm; and, though very serious, kind. He has maintained a regular, though not frequent correspondence ever since: he hopes I am happy, and trusts I am not of those who live without God in the world, and only mind earthly things. . . .

I soon asked and obtained leave of Mr. Rochester, to go and see little Adèle at the school where he had placed her. Her frantic joy at beholding me again moved me much. She looked pale and thin: she said she was not happy. I found the rules of the establishment were too strict, its course of study too severe, for a child of her age: I took her home with me. I meant to become her governess once more; but I soon found this impracticable; my time and cares were now required by another-my husband needed them all. So I sought out a school conducted on a more indulgent system; and near enough to permit of my visiting her often, and bringing her home sometimes. I took care she should never want for anything that could contribute to her comfort: she soon settled in her new abode, became very happy there, and made fair progress in her studies. As she grew up, a sound English education corrected in a great measure her French defects; and when she left school, I found in her a pleasing and obliging companion: docile, good-tempered, and well-principled. By her grateful attention to me and mine, she has long since well repaid any little kindness I ever had it in my power to offer her. . . .

I have now been married ten years. I know what it is to live entirely for and with what I love best on earth. I hold myself supremely blessed—blessed beyond what language can express; because I am

my husband's life as fully as he is mine. No woman was ever nearer to her mate than I am: ever more absolutely bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh. I know no weariness of my Edward's society: he knows none of mine, any more than we each do of the pulsation of the heart that beats in our separate bosoms; consequently, we are ever together. . . .

Mr. Rochester continued blind the first two years of our union: perhaps it was that circumstance that drew us so very near—that knit us so very close! for I was then his vision, as I am still his right hand. Literally, I was (what he often called me) the apple of his eye. He saw nature—he saw books through me; and never did I weary of gazing for his behalf, and of putting into words the effect of field, tree, town, river, cloud, sunbeam—of the landscape before us; of the weather round us—and impressing by sound on his ear what light could no longer stamp on his eye. . . .

One morning at the end of the two years, as I was writing a letter to his dictation, he came and bent over me, and said—

"Jane, have you a glittering ornament round your neck?"

I had a gold watch-chain: I answered "Yes."

"And have you a pale blue dress on?"

I had. He informed me then, that for some time he had fancied the obscurity clouding one eye was becoming less dense; and that now he was sure of it.

He and I went up to London. He had the advice of an eminent oculist; and he eventually recovered the sight of that one eye. He cannot now see very distinctly: he cannot read or write much; but he can find his way without being led by the hand: the sky is no longer a blank to him—the earth no longer a void. When his first-born was put into his arms, he could see that the boy had inherited his own eyes, as they once were—large, brilliant, and black. On that occasion, he again, with a full heart, acknowledged that God had tempered judgment with mercy. . . .

Diana and Mary Rivers are both married: alternately, once every year, they come to see us, and we go to see them. . . . As to St. John Rivers . . . he entered on the path he had marked for himself; he pursues it still. . . . His is the ambition of the high masterspirit, which aims to fill a place in the first rank of those who are redeemed from the earth, who stand without fault before the throne of God, who share the last mighty victories of the Lamb. . . .

THE LUCK OF ROARING CAMP

by Bret Harte



HOME COURSE APPRECIATION

HEN BRET HARTE WAS THIRTY-FIVE, his name was famous throughout the English-speaking world. Editors vied for his work. Celebrated hostesses contended for his presence at dinner parties. Yet he was to die with a tarnished reputation, an exhausted hack who admitted sadly: "I grind out the old tunes on the old organ and gather up the coppers."

He was born Francis Brett Harte in Albany, New York, in 1836, the son of an erratic but scholarly man who was an occasional school-teacher. The family was always poor and when the father died in 1845, he left his wife and four children in such desperate circumstances that the boy was forced to leave school at thirteen to get a job.

In 1835 his widowed mother made the long and difficult trip to California, where she remarried—this time well. California was one of the last of America's frontiers and in many places was still under the law of the six-shooter. Bret followed her soon afterward and his memoirs state that he worked in an apothecary's shop and occasionally taught school. During this time he wrote prolifically, usually just on the borderline of poverty.

At twenty he was employed as a typesetter in San Francisco for the Golden Era, and saw over one hundred of his poems and sketches into print. He married in 1862 and before long he had gained a reputation in California as a writer of patriotic verse. With his help a new magazine, the Overland Monthly, was launched in 1868 and he became its first editor. His life then changed radically as his star began to burn with uncommon brilliance in the literary firmament.



"Ain't no bigger nor a derringer."

To the second number of the magazine he contributed "The Luck of Roaring Camp," a short story which differed in important respects from anything he had written before and marked a new departure in his career. The story, though receiving no special acclaim in California, was an instant sensation in the East. Six months later he published "The Outcasts of Poker Flat" to a chorus of critical hurrahs. The humorous poem, "The Heathen Chinee," written in 1870, had an amazing success almost overnight wherever English was read and

spoken. When, in that same year, a Boston firm brought out a book of his short stories, the great literary powers in New York clamored for his presence. In 1871 he went east.

For a time Harte was a hero. He signed a contract with the Atlantic Monthly for \$10,000 to provide short stories, strutted about the town dressed like a fop, had his beard trimmed in the latest style and was the very opposite of the rough-hewn Westerner who had been expected. The quality of his next stories proved disappointing too, and his reputation declined rapidly. Soon his prosperity, as well as a ready market for his work, were no more. By 1877 he was deeply in debt and discredited, the victim of hasty writing methods and disloyalty to his own creative spirit.

Harte left for Europe in 1878 with a salary of \$2500 a year as the American consul in Crefeld, Germany. Consular duties there and in Glasgow, Scotland, lasted till 1885, when a change of administration set him back to literary hack work for support. He never returned to America. Since his reputation was still strong in England and he could command higher rates there than elsewhere, he settled near London. Harte wrote voluminously until his death in 1902, though never again capturing the distinction of his earlier efforts.

Despite his unrealized potential, Bret Harte contributed much to the art of the American short story. In his earliest works he had imitated Romantic authors and had concentrated on poetry. But when, as in "The Luck of Roaring Camp," he turned to depicting early California life in short-story form, he uncovered a literary genre which was to be fully explored by later writers.

Bret Harte had little firsthand experience of mining and was certainly not intimately acquainted with the desperate characters he sketched so brilliantly. But what he had seen he remembered well, and he had an unfailing eye for detail. Harte's characters have exceptional vividness, and his portraits of the brutal, riotous atmosphere of the frontier are always sharp and economical.

In "The Luck of Roaring Camp" we are moved by the reformation of ruthless men brought about by the helplessness of a half-breed baby. One false note and the story would have failed, its whole illusion destroyed. But Harte's pen did not fail here, as it faltered ever so slightly in the somewhat sugary ending to "The Outcasts of Poker Flat."

Bret Harte's most serious failing was that he could not come to

grips with the violent and harsh realities of the West of his time. Unlike Mark Twain, behind whose most humorous observations lay the critical vision of the unflinching realist, Bret Harte had eyes mainly for his eastern audience. His stories are often pervaded by an artificial sentimentality; primarily he sought for the heart of gold in the bosom of the social outcast, a sure-fire formula with the great mass of magazine readers.

But it can never be forgotten that it was Bret Harte who first explored the picturesque world of the mining camp, its gamblers, renegades, desperadoes and prospectors, and presented to the world a whole gallery of stark human types who were to be imitated for generations. In the eighties writers of local color were flourishing everywhere; numerous writers plunged into the territory Harte had opened and staked out.

The short human-interest story, damp with tears, often dealing with rogues, is still with us. And though other writers have adopted the form, possibly no American short story has ever had either the instant popularity or the continuing favor of the indestructible "Luck of Roaring Camp."



THERE WAS COMMOTION in Roaring Camp. It could not have been a fight, for in 1850 that was not novel enough to have called together the entire settlement. The ditches and claims were not only deserted, but "Tuttle's grocery" had contributed its gamblers, who, it will be remembered, calmly continued their game the day that French Pete and Kanaka Joe shot each other to death over the bar in the front room. The whole camp was collected before a rude cabin on the outer edge of the clearing. Conversation was carried on in a low tone, but the name of a woman was frequently repeated. It was a name familiar enough in the camp—"Cherokee Sal."

Perhaps the less said of her the better. She was a coarse and, it is to be feared, a very sinful woman. But at that time she was the only woman in Roaring Camp and was just then lying in sore extremity, when she most needed the ministration of her own sex. Dissolute, abandoned and irreclaimable, she was yet suffering a martyrdom hard enough to bear even when veiled by sympathizing womanhood, but now terrible in her loneliness. The primal curse had come to her in that original isolation which must have made the punishment of the first transgression so dreadful. It was, perhaps, part of the expiation of her sin that, at a moment when she most lacked her sex's intuitive tenderness and care, she met only the half-contemptuous faces of her masculine associates. Yet a few of the spectators were, I think, touched by her sufferings. Sandy Tipton thought it was "rough on Sal," and, in the contemplation of her condition, for a moment rose

superior to the fact that he had an ace and two bowers * in his sleeve.

It will be seen also that the situation was novel. Deaths were by no means uncommon in Roaring Camp, but a birth was a new thing. People had been dismissed from the camp effectively, finally and with no possibility of return; but this was the first time that anybody had been introduced ab initio.† Hence the excitement.

"You go in there, Stumpy," said a prominent citizen known as "Kentuck," addressing one of the loungers. "Go in there and see what you kin do. You've had experience in them things."

Perhaps there was a fitness in the selection. Stumpy, in other climes, had been the putative head of two families; in fact, it was owing to some legal informality in these proceedings that Roaring Camp, a city of refuge, was indebted to his company. The crowd approved the choice, and Stumpy was wise enough to bow to the majority. The door closed on the extempore surgeon and midwife, and Roaring Camp sat down outside, smoked its pipe and awaited the issue.

The assemblage numbered about a hundred men. One or two of these were actual fugitives from justice, some were criminal and all were reckless. Physically, they exhibited no indication of their past lives and character. The greatest scamp had a Raphael face, with a profusion of blond hair; Oakhurst, a gambler, had the melancholy air and intellectual abstraction of a Hamlet; the coolest and most courageous man was scarcely over five feet in height, with a soft voice and an embarrassed, timid manner. The term "roughs" applied to them was a distinction rather than a definition. Perhaps in the minor details of fingers, toes, ears, etc., the camp may have been deficient, but these slight omissions did not detract from their aggregate force. The strongest man had but three fingers on his right hand; the best shot had but one eye.

Such was the physical aspect of the men that were dispersed around the cabin. The camp lay in a triangular valley between two hills and a river. The only outlet was a steep trail over the summit of a hill that faced the cabin, now illuminated by the rising moon. The suffering woman might have seen it from the rude bunk whereon she lay—seen it winding like a silver thread until it was lost in the stars above.

A fire of withered pine boughs added sociability to the gathering. By degrees the natural levity of Roaring Camp returned. Bets were freely offered and taken regarding the result. Three to five that "Sal

^{*} Jack of trumps and jack of same-colored suit

[†] From the beginning

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would get through with it"; even that the child would survive; side bets as to the sex and complexion of the coming stranger. In the midst of an excited discussion, an exclamation came from those nearest the door, and the camp stopped to listen. Above the swaying and moaning of the pines, the swift rush of the river and the crackling of the fire, rose a sharp, querulous cry—a cry unlike anything heard before in the camp. The pines stopped moaning, the river ceased to rush and the fire to crackle. It seemed as if Nature had stopped to listen too.

The camp rose to its feet as one man! It was proposed to explode a barrel of gunpowder, but, in consideration of the situation of the mother, better counsels prevailed, and only a few revolvers were discharged; for, whether owing to the rude surgery of the camp or some other reason, Cherokee Sal was sinking fast. Within an hour she had climbed, as it were, that rugged road that led to the stars and so passed out of Roaring Camp, its sin and shame forever. I do not think that the announcement disturbed them much, except in speculation as to the fate of the child. "Can he live now?" was asked of Stumpy. The answer was doubtful. The only other being of Cherokee Sal's sex and maternal condition in the settlement was an ass. There was some conjecture as to fitness, but the experiment was tried. It was less problematical than the ancient treatment of Romulus and Remus, and apparently as successful.

When these details were completed, which exhausted another hour, the door was opened, and the anxious crowd of men, who had already formed themselves into a queue, entered in single file. Beside the low bunk or shelf, on which the figure of the mother was starkly outlined below the blankets, stood a pine table. On this a candle box was placed, and within it, swathed in staring red flannel, lay the last arrival at Roaring Camp. Beside the candle box was placed a hat. Its use was soon indicated.

"Gentlemen," said Stumpy, with a singular mixture of authority and ex officio complacency, "gentlemen will please pass in at the front door, round the table, and out at the back door. Them as wishes to contribute anything toward the orphan will find a hat handy." The first man entered with his hat on; he uncovered, however, as he looked about him, and so, unconsciously, set an example to the next. In such communities good and bad actions are catching. As the procession filed in, comments were audible—criticisms addressed, perhaps, rather to Stumpy, in the character of showman: "Is that him?"; "mighty small specimen"; "hasn't mor'n got the color"; "ain't bigger nor a

derringer." The contributions were as characteristic: a silver tobacco box; a doubloon; a navy revolver, silver mounted; a gold specimen; a very beautifully embroidered lady's handkerchief (from Oakhurst the gambler); a diamond breastpin; a diamond ring (suggested by the pin, with the remark from the giver that he "saw that pin and went two diamonds better"); a slung shot; a Bible (contributor not detected); a golden spur; a silver teaspoon (the initials, I regret to say, were not the giver's); a pair of surgeon's shears; a lancet; a Bank of England note for £5; and about \$200 in loose gold and silver coin.

During these proceedings Stumpy maintained a silence as impassive as the dead on his left, a gravity as inscrutable as that of the newly born on his right. Only one incident occurred to break the monotony of the curious procession. As Kentuck bent over the candle box half curiously, the child turned and, in a spasm of pain, caught at his groping finger and held it fast for a moment. Kentuck looked foolish and embarrassed. Something like a blush tried to assert itself in his weather-beaten cheek. "The d—d little cuss!" he said, as he extricated his finger with perhaps more tenderness and care than he might have been deemed capable of showing. He held that finger a little apart from its fellows as he went out and examined it curiously. The examination provoked the same original remark in regard to the child. In fact, he seemed to enjoy repeating it. "He rastled with my finger," he remarked to Tipton, holding up the member, "the d—d little cuss!"

It was four o'clock before the camp sought repose. A light burned in the cabin where the watchers sat, for Stumpy did not go to bed that night. Nor did Kentuck. He drank quite freely and related with great gusto his experience, invariably ending with his characteristic condemnation of the newcomer. It seemed to relieve him of any unjust implication of sentiment, and Kentuck had the weaknesses of the nobler sex. When everybody else had gone to bed, he walked down to the river and whistled reflectingly. Then he walked up the gulch, past the cabin, still whistling with demonstrative unconcern. At a large redwood tree he paused and retraced his steps, and again passed the cabin. Halfway down to the river's bank he again paused, and then returned and knocked at the door. It was opened by Stumpy. "How goes it?" said Kentuck, looking past Stumpy toward the candle box. "All serene," replied Stumpy. "Anything up?" "Nothing." There was a pause—an embarrassing one—Stumpy still holding the door. Then Kentuck had recourse to his finger, which he held up to Stumpy. "Rastled with it—the d—d little cuss," he said, and retired.

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The next day Cherokee Sal had such rude sepulture as Roaring Camp afforded. After her body had been committed to the hillside, there was a formal meeting of the camp to discuss what should be done with her infant. A resolution to adopt it was unanimous and enthusiastic. But an animated discussion in regard to the manner and feasibility of providing for its wants at once sprang up. It was remarkable that the argument partook of none of those fierce personalities with which discussions were usually conducted at Roaring Camp. Tipton proposed that they should send the child to Red Dog, a distance of forty miles, where female attention could be procured. But the unlucky suggestion met with fierce and unanimous opposition. It was evident that no plan which entailed parting from their new acquisition would for a moment be entertained. "Besides," said Tom Ryder, "them fellows at Red Dog would swap it, and ring in some-body else on us." A disbelief in the honesty of other camps prevailed at Roaring Camp as in other places.

The introduction of a female nurse in the camp also met with objection. It was argued that no decent woman could be prevailed to accept Roaring Camp as her home, and the speaker urged that "they didn't want any more of the other kind." This unkind allusion to the defunct mother, harsh as it may seem, was the first spasm of propriety, the first symptom of the camp's regeneration. Stumpy advanced nothing. Perhaps he felt a certain delicacy in interfering with the selection of a possible successor in office. But when questioned, he averred stoutly that he and "Jinny"—the mammal before alluded to—could manage to rear the child. There was something original, independent and heroic about the plan that pleased the camp. Stumpy was retained. Certain articles were sent for to Sacramento. "Mind," said the treasurer, as he pressed a bag of gold dust into the expressman's hand, "the best that can be got—lace, you know, and filigree work and frills—d—m the cost!"

Strange to say, the child thrived. Perhaps the invigorating climate of the mountain camp was compensation for material deficiencies. Nature took the foundling to her broader breast. In that rare atmosphere of the Sierra foothills, that air pungent with balsamic odor, that ethereal cordial at once bracing and exhilarating, he may have found food and nourishment or a subtle chemistry that transmuted ass's milk to lime and phosphorus. Stumpy inclined to the belief that it was the latter and good nursing. "Me and that ass," he would say, "has been father and mother to him! Don't you," he would add, apostro-

phizing the helpless bundle before him, "never go back on us." By the time he was a month old, the necessity of giving him a name became apparent. He had generally been known as "the Kid," "Stumpy's boy," "the Coyote" (an allusion to his vocal powers), and even by Kentuck's endearing diminutive of "the d—d little cuss." But these were felt to be vague and unsatisfactory, and were at last dismissed under another influence. Gamblers and adventurers are generally superstitious, and Oakhurst one day declared that the baby had brought "the luck" to Roaring Camp. It was certain that of late they had been successful. "Luck" was the name agreed upon, with the prefix of Tommy for greater convenience. No allusion was made to the mother, and the father was unknown. "It's better," said the philosophical Oakhurst, "to take a fresh deal all round. Call him Luck, and start him fair."

A day was accordingly set apart for the christening. What was meant by this ceremony the reader may imagine, who has already gathered some idea of the reckless irreverence of Roaring Camp. The master of ceremonies was one "Boston," a noted wag, and the occasion seemed to promise the greatest facetiousness. This ingenious satirist had spent two days in preparing a burlesque of the church service, with pointed local allusions. The choir was properly trained, and Sandy Tipton was to stand godfather. But after the procession had marched to the grove with music and banners, and the child had been deposited before a mock altar, Stumpy stepped before the expectant crowd. "It ain't my style to' spoil fun, boys," said the little man, stoutly, eying the faces around him, "but it strikes me that this thing ain't exactly on the squar. It's playing it pretty low down on this yer baby to ring in fun on him that he ain't going to understand. And ef there's going to be any godfathers round, I'd like to see who's got any better rights than me."

A silence followed Stumpy's speech. To the credit of all humorists, be it said that the first man to acknowledge its justice was the satirist, thus stopped of his fun. "But," said. Stumpy, quickly, following up his advantage, "we're here for a christening, and we'll have it. I proclaim you Thomas Luck, according to the laws of the United States and the State of California, so help me God." It was the first time that the name of the Deity had been uttered otherwise than profanely in the camp. The form of christening was perhaps even more ludicrous than the satirist had conceived; but, strangely enough, nobody saw it and nobody laughed. "Tommy" was christened as seriously as he would

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have been under a Christian roof, and cried and was comforted in as orthodox fashion.

And so the work of regeneration began in Roaring Camp. Almost imperceptibly a change came over the settlement. The cabin assigned to "Tommy Luck"—or "The Luck," as he was more frequently called —first showed signs of improvement. It was kept scrupulously clean and whitewashed. Then it was boarded, clothed and papered. The rosewood cradle, packed eighty miles by mule, had, in Stumpy's way of putting it, "sorter killed the rest of the furniture." So the rehabilitation of the cabin became a necessity. The men who were in the habit of lounging in at Stumpy's to see "how The Luck got on" seemed to appreciate the change, and, in self-defense, the rival establishment of "Tuttle's grocery" bestirred itself and imported a carpet and mirrors. The reflections of the latter on the appearance of Roaring Camp tended to produce stricter habits of personal cleanliness.

Again, Stumpy imposed a kind of quarantine upon those who aspired to the honor and privilege of holding "The Luck." It was a cruel mortification to Kentuck—who, in the carelessness of a large nature and the habits of frontier life, had begun to regard all garments as a second cuticle, which, like a snake's, only sloughed off through decay—to be debarred this privilege from certain prudential reasons. Yet such was the subtle influence of innovation that he thereafter appeared regularly every afternoon in a clean shirt, and face still shining from his ablutions. Nor were moral and social sanitary laws neglected. "Tommy," who was supposed to spend his whole existence in a persistent attempt to repose, must not be disturbed by noise. The shouting and yelling which had gained the camp its infelicitous title were not permitted within hearing distance of Stumpy's. The men conversed in whispers or smoked with Indian gravity. Profanity was tacitly given up in these sacred precincts, and throughout the camp a popular form of expletive, known as "D-n the luck!" and "Curse the luck!" was abandoned, as having a new personal bearing.

Vocal music was not interdicted, being supposed to have a soothing, tranquilizing quality, and one song, sung by "Man-o'-War Jack," an English sailor from her Majesty's Australian colonies, was quite popular as a lullaby. It was a lugubrious recital of the exploits of "the Arethusa, Seventy-four," in a muffled minor, ending with a prolonged dying fall at the burden of each verse, "On b-o-o-o-ard of the Arethusa." It was a fine sight to see Jack holding The Luck, rocking

from side to side as if with the motion of a ship and crooning forth this naval ditty. Either through the peculiar rocking of Jack or the length of his song—it contained ninety stanzas and was continued with conscientious deliberation to the bitter end—the lullaby generally had the desired effect. At such times the men would lie at full length under the trees, in the soft summer twilight, smoking their pipes and drinking in the melodious utterances. An indistinct idea that this was pastoral happiness pervaded the camp. "This 'ere kind o' think," said the Cockney Simmons, meditatively reclining on his elbow, "is 'evingly." It reminded him of Greenwich.

On the long summer days The Luck was usually carried to the gulch, from whence the golden store of Roaring Camp was taken. There, on a blanket spread over pine boughs, he would lie while the men were working in the ditches below. Latterly, there was a rude attempt to decorate this bower with flowers and sweet-smelling shrubs, and generally someone would bring him a cluster of wild honeysuckles, azaleas or the painted blossoms of Las Mariposas. The men had suddenly awakened to the fact that there were beauty and significance in these trifles, which they had so long trodden carelessly beneath their feet. A flake of glittering mica, a fragment of variegated quartz, a bright pebble from the bed of the creek became beautiful to eyes thus cleared and strengthened, and were invariably put aside for "The Luck." It was wonderful how many treasures the woods and hillsides yielded that "would do for Tommy." Surrounded by playthings such as never child out of fairyland had before, it is to be hoped that Tommy was content. He appeared to be securely happy, albeit there was an infantine gravity about him, a contemplative light in his round gray eyes, that sometimes worried Stumpy. He was always tractable and quiet, and it is recorded that once, having crept beyond his "corral"—a hedge of tessellated pine boughs which surrounded his bed-he dropped over the bank on his head in the soft earth and remained with his mottled legs in the air in that position for at least five minutes with unflinching gravity. He was extricated without a murmur.

I hesitate to record the many other instances of his sagacity, which rest, unfortunately, upon the statements of prejudiced friends. Some of them were not without a tinge of superstition. "I crep' up the bank just now," said Kentuck one day, in a breathless state of excitement, "and dern my skin if he wasn't a-talking to a jaybird as was a sittin' on his lap. There they was, just as free and sociable as anything you please, a-jawin' at each other just like two cherry-bums."

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Howbeit, whether creeping over the pine boughs or lying lazily on his back blinking at the leaves above him, to him the birds sang, the squirrels chattered, and the flowers bloomed. Nature was his nurse and playfellow. For him she would let slip between the leaves golden shafts of sunlight that fell just within his grasp; she would send wandering breezes to visit him with the balm of bay and resinous gums; to him the tall redwoods nodded familiarly and sleepily, the bumblebees buzzed and the rooks cawed a slumbrous accompaniment.

Such was the golden summer of Roaring Camp. They were "flush times," and the Luck was with them. The claims had yielded enormously. The camp was jealous of its privileges and looked suspiciously on strangers. No encouragement was given to immigration, and, to make their seclusion more perfect, the land on either side of the mountain wall that surrounded the camp they duly pre-empted. This, and a reputation for singular proficiency with the revolver, kept the reserve of Roaring Camp inviolate. The expressman—their only connecting link with the surrounding world—sometimes told wonderful stories of the camp. He would say, "They've a street up there in 'Roaring' that would lay over any street in Red Dog. They've got vines and flowers round their houses, and they wash themselves twice a day. But they're mighty rough on strangers, and they worship an Injun baby."

With the prosperity of the camp came a desire for further improvement. It was proposed to build a hotel in the following spring and to invite one or two decent families to reside there for the sake of "The Luck," who might perhaps profit by female companionship. The sacrifice that this concession to the sex cost these men, who were fiercely skeptical in regard to its general virtue and usefulness, can only be accounted for by their affection for Tommy. A few still held out. But the resolve could not be carried into effect for three months, and the minority meekly yielded in the hope that something might turn up to prevent it.

And it did.

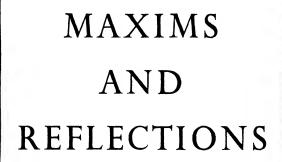
The winter of 1851 will long be remembered in the foothills. The snow lay deep on the Sierras, and every mountain creek became a river, and every river a lake. Each gorge and gulch was transformed into a tumultuous watercourse that descended the hillsides, tearing down giant trees and scattering its drift and debris along the plain. Red Dog had been twice under water and Roaring Camp had been forewarned. "Water put the gold into them gulches," said Stumpy. "It's been here once and will be here again!" And that night the North

Fork suddenly leaped over its banks and swept up the triangular valley of Roaring Camp.

In the confusion of rushing water, crushing trees and crackling timber, and the darkness which seemed to flow with the water and blot out the fair valley, little could be done to collect the scattered camp. When the morning broke, the cabin of Stumpy nearest the river bank was gone. Higher up the gulch they found the body of its unlucky owner; but the pride, the hope, the joy, the Luck of Roaring Camp had disappeared. They were returning with sad hearts, when a shout from the bank recalled them.

It was a relief boat from down the river. They had picked up, they said, a man and an infant, nearly exhausted, about two miles below. Did anybody know them, and did they belong here?

It needed but a glance to show them Kentuck lying there, cruelly crushed and bruised, but still holding the Luck of Roaring Camp in his arms. As they bent over the strangely assorted pair, they saw that the child was cold and pulseless. "He is dead," said one. Kentuck opened his eyes. "Dead?" he repeated feebly. "Yes, my man, and you are dying too." A smile lit the eyes of the expiring Kentuck. "Dying," he repeated, "he's a-taking me with him—tell the boys I've got the Luck with me now"; and the strong man, clinging to the frail babe as a drowning man is said to cling to a straw, drifted away into the shadowy river that flows forever to the unknown sea.



bу

François, Duc de La Rochefoucauld

A CONDENSATION



HOME COURSE APPRECIATION



RANÇOIS, SIXTH DUC de La Rochefoucauld (de la rôsh'foo'kô'), belongs to that small group of men who, with malice aforethought, ferret out human foibles, and then pin them down in elegant, witty language. He was a psychologist before the name existed, and found his subjects in the polite salon where the conversation of a few select sophisticates contributed to a sharpening of his perceptions and helped him to refine the epigrams with which he cut through to the meanings that lurk behind gestures and actions.

Yet we must not think of La Rochefoucauld as a dilettante, sitting idly by, observing and recording without soiling his hands or sharing in the turbulence of his times. He was very much embroiled in the intrigues of two reigns and in his attempt to make his way with rulers, mistresses, friends and foes. Life afforded him an array of experiences from which to draw his cynical conclusions in the tranquillity of his later years.

But a full life may yield many raw materials which come to nothing if the talent to polish and refine them is lacking. It is this talent which distinguishes the author of the *Maxims and Reflections* from many more important political and social figures of his period. While they exerted themselves to become the specific record of a small segment of history, surrounded by an aura of dates and dynastic names, La Rochefoucauld used them as the raw materials for a book that throws light on man as he is at all times and under all circumstances.

Along with the other literary artists of seventeenth-century France, the period referred to as the grand siècle classique (classical Golden Age), La Rochefoucauld used his knowledge to reduce individual men

to types representing the same patterns of reactions and behavior, and motivated by the same instincts and desires. He was not so much interested in the peculiar surface peculiarities, or in the eccentric and self-consciously wayward, as in the classification of true motives which our play-acting hides from others and, most insidiously, from ourselves. For that reason it may be said that with his *Maxims*, La Rochefoucauld takes his place among the great moralists of all times.

YOUTH AND FRUSTRATED AMBITION

François de La Rochefoucauld was the scion of one of the most ancient noble families of France. Born in Paris in 1613, he received the education more suited to a feudal lord than to the humanist he was to reveal himself to be. At the age of fourteen, scarcely more than a boy, he married Andrée de Vivonne, apparently a loving as well as a retiring wife, who bore her husband eight children. As Prince de Marcillac (a title he bore until the death of his father in 1650), he imperiled his own safety by championing the cause of Louis XIII's queen, Anne of Austria, against the formidable and ruthless Richelieu. When both Richelieu and the King died in 1642, the Queen became regent for her four-year-old son Louis XIV. Intrigue boiled around the Queen, and La Rochefoucauld played for position along with others. But Richelieu's successor, Mazarin, had the Queen's ear, perhaps even her heart, and cunningly he turned her against her former allies and associates.

La Rochefoucauld became increasingly bitter as he waited in vain for what he considered his just rewards. Despite his disappointments, he continued to make himself attractive in salons like that of Madame de Rambouillet, where overrefinement in dress and manners was carried to absurd extremes. In the midst of conversations choked by artificial conceits La Rochefoucauld vented his frustration in piercing epigrams. When, with the passage of time, he found that he could not even inveigle the privilege of his wife's occupying a stool in the presence of the seated Queen, he joined forces with other malcontents whose combined efforts to keep old feudal privileges or wrest new ones culminated in three successive civil wars known as the wars of the Fronde.

Nothing was achieved by these rebellions except that the conspirators revealed themselves to be ineffective and treacherous. Even love played an important part in the political intrigue, and La Rochefoucauld's affairs with such famous women as the Duchesse de Chevreuse and Madame de Longueville (by whom he had a natural son) were as much the expressions of his ambition as of any sincere passion. By the time his father died and he inherited the dukedom, La Rochefoucauld was a man whose life was filled with disillusionment. Beneath protestations of good will and faith, men and women had shown themselves to be scheming and egotistical.

MIDDLE AGE AND MELANCHOLY

In 1653, ILL AND HALF-BLIND from a battle wound, the Duke retired to his estates and set about writing his *Memoirs*. In 1656 he returned to Paris where he became a frequent visitor to the fashionable salon of Mlle. de Scudéry, a bluestocking and the author of preposterously sentimental, drawn-out novels. One of the favorite pastimes at Mlle. de Scudéry's was the writing of verbal self-portraits and one of La Rochefoucauld has come down to us that throws great light on his character and state of mind.

After a rather detailed physical description-forehead high and tolerably broad . . . eyes black, small, deeply sunken . . . wellshaped eyebrows . . . nose neither thick nor pointed . . . lips red enough . . . teeth white and tolerably even . . . rather too much chin . . . black hair curling naturally—he tells us that he is of such a melancholy disposition that he does not think he has laughed or smiled more than three or four times in the last three or four years. Such melancholy is not only innate but aggravated by circumstances, and it is so all-pervasive that it makes contact with people—even those he knows-difficult. He brushes aside false modesty and confesses to the knowledge that he is witty, has a ready tongue, a good memory and coherent thoughts, but his melancholy is so strong that often he expresses himself badly. He enjoys conversation with people of the world, especially when it involves analysis of character and habits; he even enjoys "small talk" provided it is well put. He is not ambitious, he tells us, and does not fear death. He will help others in distress but is not given to sentimental pity, for such sentiments weaken the character and are more proper to unreasonable people who need the stimulus of strong passions in order to act.

PRUDENT OLD AGE AND COMPENSATION

When youth, which he called a "continual intoxication," was behind him, La Rochefoucauld's rebelliousness ended. He had learned the lesson of prudence and came to terms with Mazarin to the



François, Duc de La Rochefoucauld.

extent of receiving a pension of 8,000 livres. Finally he was at home in a world he had given up trying to shape. He was on friendly terms with the right men and was paying court to attractive women ("When they are intelligent, I prefer their society to that of men"), among them the ageless Ninon de l'Enclos. He attended the salon of Madame de Sablé where conversation and gossip took the form of the analysis of literature and human behavior. He set down his own observations on the conversations and conversationalists in succinct polished phrases, or maxims, which he soon collected and circulated among his friends for their approval and revision.

In 1665, the year of the publication of the first authorized edition of the *Maxims*, he was involved in an intimate friendship with the talented Madame de Lafayette. There has been much speculation as to whether the relationship was one of friendship or love, but the important fact is that it was a mutual attraction. Madame de Lafayette offered him her warmth in the autumn of his life, while he stimulated her to write what is considered the first serious psychological novel written in the French language, *The Princess of Cleves*, the story of a woman noble both in station and heart, who, when she causes her husband's death by revealing her passionate love for another man, foregoes her love and retires to a convent.

La Rochesoucauld spent much time in revising his maxims, composing new ones and writing his *Moral Reflections*. The last years of his life were marred by the deaths of his mother, his wife, two sons, Madame de Sablé and Madame de Longueville. In 1680 he died.

THE CHARACTER OF THE MAN

Perhaps even more revealing than La Rochefoucauld's portrait of himself is the one written by the Cardinal de Retz. In it La Rochefoucauld is depicted as a "frustrated conspirator":

"He has never been capable of dealing with situations; this is strange, since he had qualities which might, in anyone else, have made up for those he had not. His outlook was not broad enough, and he did not even see what was closest to him in its fullest import. . . . He was irresolute; and I do not know to what to attribute such irresolution; it could not have derived from his fertile imagination which is nothing less than lively. Nor can I attribute it to the sterility of his judgment, for, although it is not at its best in action, he is very reasonable. We can see the effects of this irresolution, without suspecting its origins. . . ."

The cardinal was doubtless only one of his contemporaries to whom La Rochefoucauld was a wavering, timid man, too analytical perhaps, too meditative to give his allegiance or enthusiasm to any one cause.

THE CHARACTER OF HIS PHILOSOPHY

It was his clinical impersonality that made La Rochefoucauld a significant author rather than an insignificant soldier or courtier. He developed a point of view and happily found the clearest, most incisive expression for it: the maxim. His philosophy may be summed up in one of the shortest of all his maxims: "Self-love is the greatest of all flatterers." A more long-winded moralist would have expanded this thought into an essay, but La Rochefoucauld realized that the poisoned dart is more often deadly than the blunderbuss, and that the single note of a maxim could produce deeper resonances than a wearisome sermon.

In a series of staccato statements he shows us that the motives of human conduct will elude us unless we grasp the fact that self-love manifests itself in different shapes and forms. The keenest mind often fails to penetrate its disguises, for even the sacrifices we make are at bottom the satisfactions of a hidden need for sacrifice or the confirmation of the high opinion we hold of ourselves. What we call virtue is, in the last analysis, the crude carbon of our egos subconsciously transformed into diamonds which we give others in order to applaud ourselves for our generosity.

All the apparent confusions and perplexities of man's relationship to his fellow man reduce themselves to a desire for self-satisfaction. In man's relationship to the Divine, La Rochefoucauld was scarcely interested, and metaphysics—the essential nature of reality—was completely out of his sphere. He was not a mystic; he concerned himself almost exclusively with social conduct and ethics. Surrounded as he was by the falsely pious, he understood that true mortification is unostentatious, whereas vanity makes the other more common types of piety all too easy. Even sobriety is more often the fear of ill-health or the result of fickle appetites rather than an absolute virtue. And as for the innocent or the ascetic, they often abetted evil by making themselves vulnerable to it.

MAN IS NOT THE MASTER OF HIS FATE

Yet if we were to look for a metaphysical background to La Rochefoucauld's thought, we would turn to the austere philosophy of the Dutch theologian, Cornelis Jansen, who propounded the idea of man's depravity and denied free will. Although we can in no way prove that La Rochefoucauld was noticeably swayed by the Jansenist sympathies of Madame de Sablé, we cannot deny that he holds a view of man which, while it is always secular, is parallel with that of the Jansenists. Throughout the *Maxims* runs the deep conviction that man is not the conscious master of his actions, that all of his passions are nothing more than different degrees of heat or cold in the blood, with their duration or direction no more dependent on him than his life span. All men are *self-ish* in so far as they are constantly obeying the promptings of the Unconscious Ego, and some men are *selfish* as they consciously and deliberately play on the weaknesses of others for their own personal advantage. The selfish are men we despise and rail against. But the self-ish are the more interesting, for they are unaware of their true motives and fall into the vice of self-righteousness.

SELF-LOVE: THE SPARK THAT IGNITES US ALL

Self-love, then, speaks every sort of language and plays every type of role including the unselfish one. Modesty is a role we play very frequently since we would rather deprecate our good qualities than not talk about them at all. The pity we display is the recognition of our own unhappiness in others. Heroism is all too often the result of chance, ambition or a combination of humors, while great men are simply those who aim higher and therefore run greater risks than their fellow men. We help others in the hope that they will help us; and when we bear up under our own misfortunes it is to minimize our pain. When we choose the difficult, austere life, or align ourselves with causes harmful to ourselves, we do so for the subtle pleasure of exchanging an obvious satisfaction for a less obvious one. We laud the virtue of another person in order to erect a mirror for our own; we decry vice in order to make a show of our freedom from it. And when we think good, honest thoughts, we give our mind the chance of showing its courtesy.

In short, man does nothing which does not originate with himself and which does not in some way conform with his own desires, his caprices or his temperament. The world, says La Rochefoucauld, is a complex of hypocrisies of all degrees, clothed in infinite disguises. Men are endowed with, or have evolved, infinite resources to further their own ends even when they are convinced that they are working against themselves. Man's desires and ambitions are fired more by his





"He was a psychologist before the name existed and found his subjects in the polite salon."

own inclinations than by the objective merits of the goals he sets before himself.

BUT WHAT OF IDEAL LOVE?

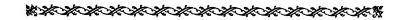
But what of love, traditionally the most altruistic of attachments? What of the ideal love so highly praised in books of chivalry, or in the refined pastoral romances La Rochefoucauld had been so fond of during his youthful days as the "Queen's cavalier"? The pleasure of love, answers the dour cynic, comes more from the passion one entertains than from the passion one inspires: "There are some who never would have loved if they had never heard it spoken of." Those who remain faithful do so because they have set up the ideal of constancy and would lose face in default.

And as for marriages, there are many good, but never any delightful ones. Even in friendship, which is love without desire, we always admire those who admire us, and therefore we manage to get more than we give. Even when we deplore the inconstancy of a friend, it is to justify our own, and when we praise, we do so in order to be praised in return. In the case of new friends, we had better be sure that it is our merit, and not the lure of our reputation, that forms the attraction.

LA ROCHEFOUCAULD: ANTIDOTE TO FUZZINESS

VERY LITTLE OF THE OBSERVABLE WORLD of society escapes La Rochefoucauld's attention. He does not have the liberal, amusing spirit we often find in other Frenchmen. He has but one theme. Yet on that theme he traces a thousand variations which may shock or perturb, but can also lead us to true insight. Many feel that he is too certain, too inflexible, too unrelieved. Others object to his somber deterministic view of human nature. We bridle at his implication that the human spirit cannot correct or restrain its vices and hypocrisies; we recoil at the thought that virtue is simply the outer semblance of honesty or goodness.

Yet we cannot help recognizing in this little book an excellent antidote to self-deception, fuzzy thinking and sentimentality. La Rochefoucauld teaches us to re-examine our consciences sincerely, to realize our limitations, to be less impressed by the masks which not only others but we ourselves wear. Lord Chesterfield's advice bears repeating: read some of La Rochefoucauld's maxims in the morning, ponder over them well, and then compare them with the originals you will meet in the evening.



OUR VIRTUES ARE MOST FREQUENTLY BUT VICES DISGUISED.

- 45 What we term virtue is often but a mass of various actions and interests, which fortune, or our own industry, manages to arrange; and it is not always from valor or from chastity that men are brave and women chaste.
 - Self-love is the greatest of flatterers.
- The duration of our passions is no more dependent upon us than the duration of our life.
- Passion often renders the most clever man a fool, and even sometimes renders the most foolish man clever.
- Great and striking actions which dazzle the eyes are represented by politicians as the effect of great designs, instead of which they are commonly caused by the temper and the passions. Thus the war between Augustus and Anthony, which is set down to the ambition they entertained of making themselves masters of the world, was probably but an effect of jealousy.
- ◆§ The passions are the only advocates which always persuade. They are a natural art, the rules of which are infallible; and the

simplest man with passion will be more persuasive than the most eloquent without.

- The passions possess a certain injustice and self-interest which make it dangerous to follow them, and in reality we should distrust them even when they appear most trustworthy.
- ◆§ In the human heart there is a perpetual generation of passions; so that the ruin of one is almost always the foundation of another.
- •§ Passions often produce their contraries: avarice sometimes leads to prodigality, and prodigality to avarice; we are often obstinate through weakness and daring through timidity.
- •§ Whatever care we take to conceal our passions under the appearances of piety and honor, they are always to be seen through these veils.
- •§ Our self-love endures more impatiently the condemnation of our tastes than of our opinions.
- ◆§ Men are not only prone to forget benefits and injuries; they even hate those who have obliged them, and cease to hate those who have injured them. The necessity of revenging an injury or of recompensing a benefit seems a slavery to which they are unwilling to submit.
- **△**§ The clemency of princes is often but policy to win the affections of the people.
- 45 This clemency of which they make a merit arises oftentimes from vanity, sometimes from idleness, oftentimes from fear and almost always from all three combined.
- ▶ The moderation of those who are happy arises from the calm which good fortune bestows upon their temper.
- ◆§ Moderation is caused by the fear of exciting the envy and contempt which those merit who are intoxicated with their good fortune; it is a vain display of our strength of mind, and in short the modera-

tion of men at their greatest height is only a desire to appear greater than their fortune.

- ◆§ We have all sufficient strength to support the misfortunes of others.
- ◆5 The constancy of the wise is only the talent of concealing the agitation of their hearts.
- ▶ Those who are condemned to death affect sometimes a constancy and contempt for death which is only the fear of facing it; so that one may say that this constancy and contempt are to their minds what the bandage is to their eyes.
- A Philosophy triumphs easily over past evils and future evils; but present evils triumph over it.
- Few people know death; we only endure it, usually from determination, and even from stupidity and custom; and most men only die because they know not how to prevent dying.
 - ⊌§ We need greater virtues to sustain good than evil fortune.
 - ■§ Neither the sun nor death can be looked at without winking.
- S Jealousy is in a manner just and reasonable, as it tends to preserve a good which belongs, or which we believe belongs to us; on the other hand envy is a fury which cannot endure the happiness of others.
- ◆§ The evil that we do does not attract to us so much persecution and hatred as our good qualities.
- ₩e have more strength than will; and it is often merely for an excuse we say things are impossible.
- 45 If we had no faults we should not take so much pleasure in noting those of others.
- 45 Jealousy lives upon doubt; and comes to an end or becomes a fury as soon as it passes from doubt to certainty.

- 45 Pride is much the same in all men, the only difference is the method and manner of showing it.
- It would seem that nature, which has so wisely ordered the organs of our body for our happiness, has also given us pride to spare us the mortification of knowing our imperfections.
- Φ§ Pride has a larger part than goodness in our remonstrances with those who commit faults, and we reprove them not so much to correct as to persuade them that we ourselves are free from faults.
- ◆⑤ We promise according to our hopes; we perform according to our fears.
- Interest speaks all sorts of tongues and plays all sorts of characters; even that of disinterestedness.
 - 🛂 Interest blinds some and makes some see.
- ▶ Those who apply themselves too closely to little things often become incapable of great things.
 - વ્કે We have not enough strength to follow all our reason.
- △§ A man often believes himself leader when he is led; as his mind endeavors to reach one goal, his heart insensibly drags him toward another.
- Strength and weakness of mind are misnamed; they are really only the good or happy arrangement of our bodily organs.
- ◆5 The attachment or indifference which philosophers have shown to life is only the style of their self-love, about which we can no more dispute than of that of the palate or of the choice of colors.
- 45 Happiness is in the taste, and not in the things themselves; we are happy from possessing what we like, not from possessing what others like.

- **ఆ**§ We are never so happy or so unhappy as we suppose.
- Those who think they have merit persuade themselves that they are honored by being unhappy, in order to persuade others and themselves that they are worthy to be the butt of fortune.
- S Nothing should so much diminish the satisfaction which we feel with ourselves as seeing that we disapprove at one time of that which we approve of at another.
- ◆§ The contempt of riches in philosophers was only a hidden desire to avenge their merit upon the injustice of fortune, by despising the very goods of which fortune had deprived them; it was a secret to guard themselves against the degradation of poverty, it was a back way by which to arrive at that distinction which they could not gain by riches.
- √5 To establish ourselves in the world we do everything to appear
 as if we were established.
- Although men flatter themselves with their great actions, they are not so often the result of a great design as of chance.
- √5 It would seem that our actions have lucky or unlucky stars to which they owe a great part of the blame or praise which is given them.
- There are no accidents so unfortunate from which skillful men will not draw some advantage, nor so fortunate that foolish men will not turn them to their hurt.
- •5 Fortune turns all things to the advantage of those on whom she smiles.
- Sincerity is an openness of heart; we find it in very few people; what we usually see is only an artful dissimulation to win the confidence of others.
- words credible and weighty, and to attach a religious aspect to our conversation.

- ◆5 Truth does not do as much good in the world, as its counterfeits do evil.
- There is no praise we have not lavished upon prudence; and yet she cannot assure to us the most trifling event.
- 45 A clever man ought to so regulate his interests that each will fall in due order. Our greediness so often troubles us, making us run after so many things at the same time, that while we too eagerly look after the least, we miss the greatest.
 - **△**§ What grace is to the body, good sense is to the mind.
- 45 It is difficult to define love; all we can say is that in the soul it is a desire to rule, in the mind it is a sympathy and in the body it is a hidden and delicate wish to possess what we love—plus many mysteries.
- 45 If there is a pure love, exempt from the mixture of our other passions, it is that which is concealed at the bottom of the heart and of which even ourselves are ignorant.
- 45 There is no disguise which can long hide love where it exists, nor feign it where it does not.
- ◆5 There are few people who would not be ashamed of being beloved when they love no longer.
- •§ If we judge of love by the majority of its results, it rather resembles hatred than friendship.
- ◆§ We may find women who have never indulged in an intrigue, but it is rare to find those who have intrigued but once.
- •§ There is only one sort of love, but there are a thousand different copies.
- •§ Neither love nor fire can subsist without perpetual motion; both cease to live as soon as they cease to hope, or to fear.
- ◆§ There is real love just as there are real ghosts; every person speaks of it, few persons have seen it.

- ◆5 The love of justice is simply in the majority of men the fear of suffering injustice.
 - Silence is the best resolve for him who distrusts himself.
- 45 What renders us so changeable in our friendship is that it is difficult to know the qualities of the soul, but easy to know those of the mind.
- •§ We can love nothing but what agrees with us, and we can only follow our taste or our pleasure when we prefer our friends to ourselves; nevertheless it is only by that preference that friendship can be true and perfect.
- What men term friendship is merely a partnership with a collection of reciprocal interests, and an exchange of favors—in fact, it is but a trade in which self-love always expects to gain something.
- 45 It is more disgraceful to distrust than to be deceived by our friends.
- We often persuade ourselves to love people who are more powerful than we are, yet interest alone produces our friendship; we do not give our hearts away for the good we wish to do, but for that we expect to receive.
 - ◆§ Our distrust of another justifies his deceit.
- As Men would not live long in society were they not the dupes of one another.
- Self-love increases or diminishes for us the good qualities of our friends in proportion to the satisfaction we feel with them, and we judge of their merit by the manner in which they act toward us.
 - €§ Everyone blames his memory; no one blames his judgment.
- ◆§ In the intercourse of life we please more by our faults than by our good qualities.

- ◆§ The largest ambition has the least appearance of ambition when it meets with an absolute impossibility in compassing its object.
- •§ Old men delight in giving good advice as a consolation for the fact that they can no longer set bad examples.
- Great names degrade instead of elevating those who know not how to sustain them.
- The test of extraordinary merit is to see those who envy it the most yet obliged to praise it.
- △§ A man is perhaps ungrateful, but often less chargeable with ingratitude than his benefactor is.
 - εξ Everyone praises his heart; none dare praise his understanding.
- ▶ Politeness of mind consists in thinking chaste and refined thoughts.
- ←§ Gallantry of mind is saying the most empty things in an agreeable manner.
- ☑ Ideas often flash across our minds more complete than we could make them after much labor.
 - **∞**§ The head is ever the dupe of the heart.
- ◆§ Those who know their minds do not necessarily know their hearts.
- As Men and things have each their proper perspective; to judge rightly of some it is necessary to see them near, of others we can never judge rightly but at a distance.
- & A man for whom accident discovers sense is not a rational being. A man only is so who understands, who distinguishes, who tests it.
- ◆5 To understand matters rightly we should understand their details, and as that knowledge is almost infinite, our knowledge is always superficial and imperfect.

- •§ One kind of flirtation is to boast we never flirt.
- •§ The head cannot long play the part of the heart.
- ५ Youth changes its tastes by the warmth of its blood; age retains its tastes by habit.
 - Solution Solut
 - 🕳 3 The more we love a woman, the more prone we are to hate her.
- વ્હે The blemishes of the mind, like those of the face, increase by age.
 - •§ There may be good but there are no pleasant marriages.
- **45** We are inconsolable at being deceived by our enemies and betrayed by our friends, yet still we are often content to be thus served by ourselves.
 - ્રું It is as easy unwittingly to deceive oneself as to deceive others.
- √5 Nothing is less sincere than the way of asking and giving advice. The person asking seems to pay deference to the opinion of his friend, while thinking in reality of making his friend approve his opinion and be responsible for his conduct. The person giving the advice returns the confidence placed in him by eager and disinterested zeal, in doing which he is usually guided only by his own interest or reputation.
- Fig. The most subtle of our acts is to simulate blindness for snares that we know are set for us. We are never so easily deceived as when trying to deceive.
- **4** ♦ We become so accustomed to disguise ourselves to others that at last we are disguised to ourselves.
- ◆δ We often act treacherously more from weakness than from a fixed motive.

- •§ We frequently do good to enable us with impunity to do evil.
- •§ If we conquer our passions, it is more from their weakness than from our strength.
- ◆§ If we never flattered ourselves, we should have but scant pleasure.
- The most deceitful persons spend their lives in blaming deceit, so as to use it on some great occasion to promote some great interest.
- •§ The daily employment of cunning marks a little mind; it generally happens that those who resort to it in one respect to protect themselves lay themselves open to attack in another.
- 45 The true way to be deceived is to think oneself more knowing than others.
- **७** Too great cleverness is but deceptive delicacy; true delicacy is the most substantial cleverness.
- **७**5 It is sometimes necessary to play the fool to avoid being deceived by cunning men.
 - •§ Weakness is the only fault which cannot be cured.
- **⇔**§ The smallest fault of women who give themselves up to love is to love.
 - **4** It is far easier to be wise for others than to be so for oneself.
- ◆§ The only good examples are those that make us see the absurdity of bad originals.
- & We are never so ridiculous from the habits we have as from those that we affect to have.
- ◆§ We sometimes differ more widely from ourselves than we do from others.

- 45 There are some who never would have loved if they never had heard it spoken of.
 - •§ A man would rather say evil of himself than say nothing.
- Φ5 One of the reasons that we find so few persons rational and agreeable in conversation is that there is hardly a person who does not think more of what he wants to say than of his answer to what is said. The most clever and polite are content with only seeming attentive while we perceive in their mind and eyes that at the very time they are wandering from what is said and desire to return to what they want to say. The worst way to persuade or please others is to try thus strongly to please ourselves, and to listen well and to answer well are some of the greatest charms we can have in conversation.
- ▶§ If it was not for the company of fools, a witty man would often be greatly at a loss.
- €§ We often boast that we are never bored, but yet we are so conceited that we do not perceive how often we bore others.
- ◆§ As it is the mark of great minds to say many things in a few words, so it is that of little minds to use many words to say nothing.
- 45 It is oftener by the estimation of our own feelings that we exaggerate the good qualities of others, than by their merit, and when we praise them, we wish to attract their praise.
- ◆§ We do not like to praise, and we never praise without a motive. Praise is flattery, artful, hidden, delicate, which gratifies differently him who praises and him who is praised. The one takes it as the reward of merit, the other bestows it to show his impartiality and knowledge.
- ◆§ We often select envenomed praise which, by a reaction upon those we praise, shows faults we could not have shown by other means.
 - **⇔**§ Usually we only praise to be praised.
- ♣5 Few are sufficiently wise to prefer censure, which is useful, to praise, which is treacherous.

- •§ The refusal of praise is only the wish to be praised twice.
- ◆§ If we never flattered ourselves, the flattery of others would not hurt us.
- 45 There are some persons who only disgust with their abilities; there are persons who please even with their faults.
- There are persons whose only merit consists in saying and doing stupid things at the right time, and who ruin all if they change their manners.
- ◆5 The fame of great men ought always to be estimated by the means used to acquire it.
 - ◆ Flattery is base coin to which only our vanity gives currency.
- ■§ It is much easier to seem fitted for posts we do not fill than for those we do.
- Ability wins us the esteem of the true men; luck that of the people.
- **⇔**§ The world oftener rewards the appearance of merit than merit itself.
- 45 However deceitful hope may be, yet she carries us on pleasantly to the end of life.
- હ Idleness and fear keep us in the path of duty, but our virtue often gets the praise.
- - As rivers are lost in the sea, so are virtues in self.

- 45 There are different kinds of curiosity: one springs from interest, which makes us desire to know everything that may be profitable to us; another from pride, which springs from a desire of knowing what others are ignorant of.
- ◆5 It is far better to accustom our mind to bear the ills we have, than to speculate on those which may befall us.
- ◆§ Constancy in love is a perpetual inconstancy which causes our heart to attach itself to all the qualities of the person we love in succession, sometimes giving the preference to one, sometimes to another. This constancy is merely inconstancy fixed, and limited to the same person.
- 45 There are two kinds of constancy in love: one arising from incessantly finding in the loved one fresh objects to love; the other from regarding it as a point of honor to be constant.
- As Perseverance is not deserving of blame or praise, as it is merely the continuance of tastes and feelings which we can neither create nor destroy.
- What makes us like new studies is not so much the weariness we have of the old or the wish for change, as the desire to be admired by those who know more than ourselves, and the hope of advantage over those who know less.
- ◆§ We sometimes complain of the levity of our friends to justify our own by anticipation.
- S Our repentance is not so much sorrow for the ill we have done, as fear of the ill that may happen to us.
- S Vices enter into the composition of virtues as poison into that of medicines. Prudence collects and blends the two and renders them useful against the ills of life.
- ◆§ We admit our faults to repair, by our sincerity, the evil we have done in the opinion of others.

- ◆§ We do not despise all who have vices, but we do despise all who have not virtues.
 - →§ Only great men are capable of great faults.
- -\$ When our vices leave us, we flatter ourselves with the idea we have left them.
- There are relapses in the diseases of the mind as in those of the body; what we call a cure is often no more than an intermission or change of disease.
- •5 The defects of the mind are like the wounds of the body. Whatever care we take to heal them, the scars ever remain, and there is always danger of their reopening.
- •§ The reason which often prevents our abandoning a single vice is having so many.
 - ◆§ We easily forget those faults which are known only to ourselves.
- There are men of whom we can never believe evil without having seen it. Yet there are very few in whom we should be surprised to see it.
 - ∞§ The desire to appear clever often prevents our being so.
 - ✓S Virtue would not go far did not vanity escort her.
- deceives himself, but he who thinks that the world cannot be content with him deceives himself yet more.
- Falsely honest men are those who disguise their faults both to themselves and others; truly honest men are those who know them perfectly and confess them.
 - 48 He is really wise who is nettled at nothing.
- ◆§ The coldness of women is a balance and burden they add to their beauty.

- ◆§ Virtue in woman is often the love of reputation and repose.
- ◆5 Folly follows us at all stages of life. If one appears wise, 'tis but because his folly is proportioned to his age and fortune.
- 45 There are foolish people who know and who skillfully use their folly.
- ◆§ Most people judge men only by their popularity or by their wealth.
- ▲§ Love of glory, fear of shame, greed of fortune, the desire to make life agreeable and comfortable, and the wish to depreciate others are often causes of that bravery so vaunted among men.
- ⋄§ Valor in common soldiers is a perilous method of earning their living.
- Perfect bravery and sheer cowardice are two extremes rarely found. The space between them is vast, and embraces all other sorts of courage. The difference between them is not less than between faces and tempers. Men will freely expose themselves at the beginning of an action, and relax and be easily discouraged if it should last. Some are content to satisfy worldly honor, and beyond that will do little else. Some are not always equally masters of their timidity. Others allow themselves to be overcome by panic; others charge because they dare not remain at their posts. Some may be found whose courage is strengthened by small perils which prepare them to face greater dangers. Some will dare a sword cut and flinch from a bullet; others dread bullets little and fear to fight with swords. These varied kinds of courage agree in this, that night, by increasing fear and concealing gallant or cowardly actions, allows men to spare themselves. There is even a more general discretion to be observed, for we meet with no man who does all he would have done if he were assured of getting off scot-free; so that it is certain that the fear of death does somewhat subtract from valor.
- •§ Perfect valor is to do without witnesses what one would do before all the world.

- ◆§ Hypocrisy is the homage vice pays to virtue.
- ◆§ Most men expose themselves in battle enough to save their honor, few wish to do so more than sufficiently, or more than is necessary to make the design for which they expose themselves succeed.
- ◆§ Vanity, shame and, above all, disposition often make men brave and women chaste.
- **45** We do not wish to lose life; we do wish to gain glory, and this makes brave men show more tact and address in avoiding death, than rogues show in preserving their fortunes.
- ◆§ Gratitude is as the good faith of merchants: it holds commerce together; and we do not pay because it is just to pay debts, but because we shall thereby more easily find people who will lend.
- What makes false reckoning, as regards gratitude, is that the pride of the giver and the receiver cannot agree as to the value of the benefit.
- **4** Too great a hurry to discharge an obligation is a kind of ingratitude.
- **∞**§ Lucky people are bad hands at correcting their faults; they always believe that they are right when fortune backs up their vice or folly.
- ◆§ The good we have received from a man should make us excuse the wrong he does us.
- In afflictions there are various kinds of hypocrisy. In one, under the pretext of weeping for one dear to us, we bemoan ourselves; we regret her good opinion of us, we deplore the loss of our comfort, our pleasure, our consideration. Thus the dead have the credit of tears shed for the living. I affirm 'tis a kind of hypocrisy which in these afflictions deceives itself. There is another kind not so innocent because it imposes on all the world: that is the grief of those who aspire to the glory of a noble and immortal sorrow. After Time, which ab-

sorbs all, has obliterated what sorrow they had, they still obstinately obtrude their tears, their sighs, their groans; they wear a solemn face and try to persuade others by all their acts that their grief will end only with their life. This sad and distressing vanity is commonly found in ambitious women. As their sex closes to them all paths to glory, they strive to render themselves celebrated by showing an inconsolable affliction. There is yet another kind of tears arising from but small sources, which flow easily and cease as easily. One weeps to achieve a reputation for tenderness, weeps to be pitied, weeps to be bewept; in fact one weeps to avoid the disgrace of not weeping!

- હ§ It is more often from pride than from ignorance that we are so obstinately opposed to current opinions; we find the first places taken, and we do not want to be the last.
- **७** We are easily consoled at the misfortunes of our friends when they enable us to prove our tenderness for them.
- So No one should be praised for his goodness if he has not strength enough to be wicked. All other goodness is but too often an idleness or powerlessness of will.
- ✓§ It is not so dangerous to do wrong to most men, as to do them too much good.
- Solution Nothing flatters our pride so much as the confidence of the great, because we regard it as the result of our worth, without remembering that generally 'tis but vanity or the inability to keep a secret.
- ■§ Flirtation is at the bottom of woman's nature, although all do not practice it, some being restrained by fear, others by sense.
- ◆§ We often bore others when we think we cannot possibly bore them.
 - ◆§ There is great ability in knowing how to conceal one's ability.
- ₩ What seems generosity is often disguised ambition that despises small, to run after greater, interest.

- •§ The fidelity of most men is merely an invention of self-love to win confidence; a method to place us above others and to render us depositaries of the most important matters.
 - ◆

 § Magnanimity despises all, to win all.
- ◆5 True eloquence consists in saying all that should be, not all that could be, said.
- •§ There are people whose faults become them; others whose very virtues disgrace them.
- ◆5 It is as common to change one's tastes, as it is uncommon to change one's inclinations.
 - •§ Interest sets at work all sorts of virtues and vices.
- 45 Humility is often a feigned submission which we employ to supplant others. It is one of the devices of pride to lower us in order to raise us; and truly pride transforms itself in a thousand ways, and is never so well disguised and more able to deceive than when it hides itself under the form of humility.
- ■§ In all professions we affect a part and an appearance to seem what we wish to be. Thus the world is merely composed of actors.
- ←§ Gravity is a mysterious carriage of the body invented to conceal the want of mind.
- ◆§ The pleasure of love is in loving; we are happier in the passion we feel than in that we inspire.
- 45 There is no passion wherein self-love reigns so powerfully as in love, and one is always more ready to sacrifice the peace of the loved one than his own.
- ◆§ What we call liberality is often but the vanity of giving, which we like more than that we give away.

- ◆§ Pity is often a reflection of our own evils in the ills of others. It is a delicate foresight of the troubles into which we may fall. We help others that on like occasions we may be helped ourselves, and these services which we render are in reality benefits we confer on ourselves by anticipation.
- ◆§ We deceive ourselves if we believe that there are violent passions like ambition and love that can triumph over others. Idleness, languishing as she is, does not often fail in being mistress; she usurps authority over all the plans and actions of life; imperceptibly consuming and destroying both passions and virtues.
- examined it is the effect of pride and laziness. We wish to find the guilty, and we do not wish to trouble ourselves in examining the crime.
- We credit judges with the meanest motives, and yet we desire that our reputation and fame should depend upon the judgment of men, who are all, either from their jealousy or pre-occupation or want of intelligence, opposed to us—and yet 'tis only to make these men decide in our favor that we peril in so many ways both our peace and our life.
 - ■§ No man is clever enough to know all the evil he does.
 - ◆§ Youth is a continual intoxication; it is the fever of reason.
- A Nothing should so humiliate men who have deserved great praise, as the care they still take to gain credit for trifles.
- There are persons of whom the world approves who have no merit beyond the vices they use in the affairs of life.
- ◆§ The beauty of novelty is to love as the flower to the fruit; it lends a luster which is easily lost, but which never returns.
- 45 Absence extinguishes small passions and increases great ones, as the wind will blow out a candle, and blow in a fire.
- ₩5 Women often think they love when they do not love. The business of a love affair, the emotion of mind that sentiment induces, the

natural bias toward the pleasure of being loved, the difficulty of refusing persuade them that they have real passion when they have but flirtation.

- When we exaggerate the tenderness of our friends toward us, it is often less from gratitude than from a desire to exhibit our own merit.
- 45 The praise we give to newcomers into the world arises from the envy we bear to those who are established.
- Some disguised lies so resemble truth that we should judge badly, were we not deceived.
- ◆5 Sometimes there is not less ability in knowing how to use, than in giving, good advice.
- ાં There are wicked people who would be much less dangerous if they were wholly without goodness.
- As Magnanimity is sufficiently defined by its name; nevertheless one can say it is the good sense of pride, the most noble way of receiving praise.
- 45 It is impossible to love a second time those whom we have really ceased to love.
- There are matters and maladies which at certain times remedies only serve to make worse; true skill consists in knowing when it is dangerous to use them.
 - Affected simplicity is refined imposture.
 - ◆§ Man's merit, like the crops, has its season.
- •§ One may say of temper as of many buildings: it has diverse aspects, some agreeable, others disagreeable.
- Moderation cannot claim the merit of opposing and overcoming ambition; they are never found together. Moderation is the languor and sloth of the soul; ambition, its activity and heat.

- ◆§ We always like those who admire us; we do not always like those whom we admire.
 - **ఆ**§ It is well that we know not all our wishes.
- ાં It is difficult to love those we do not esteem, but it is no less so to love those whom we esteem much more than ourselves.
- Bodily temperaments have a common course and rule which imperceptibly affect our will. They advance in combination and successively exercise a secret empire over us, so that, without our perceiving it, they become a great part of all our actions.
- The gratitude of most men is but a secret desire of receiving greater benefits.
- Almost all the world takes pleasure in paying small debts; many people show gratitude for trifling, but there is hardly one who does not show ingratitude for great favors.
 - •§ There are follies as catching as infections.
 - ∞§ Many people despise, but few know how to bestow wealth.
- ♦ Whatever good quality may be imputed to us, we ourselves find nothing new in it.
- **ఆ**δ We may forgive those who bore us; we cannot forgive those whom we bore.
- ✓§ Interest, which is accused of all our misdeeds, often should be praised for our good deeds.
- ■§ We find very few ungrateful people when we are in a position to confer favors.

- ◆§ Moderation is made a virtue to limit the ambition of the great; to console ordinary people for their small fortune and equally small ability.
- There are persons fated to be fools, who commit follies not only by choice, but who are forced by fortune to do so.
- Sometimes there are accidents in our life, the skillful extrication from which demands a little folly.
- ◆§ Lovers are never tired of each other—they always speak of themselves.
- 45 How is it that our memory is good enough to retain the least triviality that happens to us, and yet not good enough to recollect how often we have told it to the same person?
- **45** The extreme delight we take in talking of ourselves should warn us that it is not shared by those who listen.
- what commonly hinders us from showing the recesses of our heart to our friends is not the distrust we have of them, but that we have of ourselves.
 - S Weak persons cannot be sincere.
- ન્દું 'Tis a small misfortune to oblige an ungrateful man; but it is unbearable to be obliged by a scoundrel.
- To praise princes for virtues they do not possess is but to reproach them with impunity.
- **ఆ**§ We are nearer loving those who hate us, than those who love us more than we desire.
 - ◆§ Those only are despicable who fear to be despised.
 - •§ There is more self-love than love in jealousy.

- ◆§ We admit small faults to persuade others that we have not great ones.
 - •§ Envy is more irreconcilable than hatred.
- **4** § We believe sometimes that we hate flattery—we only dislike the method.
 - **ఆ**δ We pardon in the degree that we love.
- •§ It is more difficult to be faithful to a mistress when one is happy, than when one is ill-treated by her.
 - ◆
 § Women cannot be completely severe unless they hate.
 - ⊌§ Women can less easily resign flirtations than love.
 - √S In love deceit almost always goes further than mistrust.
 - •3 There is a kind of love, the excess of which forbids jealousy.
- ✓ Certain good qualities resemble the senses, in that those who
 wholly lack them can neither perceive nor understand them.
- **७** We only appreciate our good or evil in proportion to our self-love.
- S The wit of most women rather strengthens their folly than their reason.

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- ◆5 The passions of youth are scarcely more detrimental to happiness than the apathy of old age.
- ◆§ To be a great man, one should know how to profit by every phase of fortune.

- ◆5 Most men, like plants, possess hidden qualities which chance alone discovers.
- **ఆ**§ Critical circumstances reveal our characters to others and, still more, to ourselves.
- હંઉ We find hardly any persons of good sense, save those who agree with us.
 - ◆§ When one loves, one doubts even what one most believes.
 - •§ The greatest miracle of love is to eradicate flirtation.
- હ ઇ Why we hate with so much bitterness those who deceive us is because they think themselves more clever than we are.
- **ఆ**§ We almost always are bored with persons with whom we should not be bored.
 - ▲§ A gentleman may love like a lunatic, but not like a beast.
- ◆5 There are certain defects which, well mounted, glitter like virtue itself.
- Sometimes we lose friends, for whose loss our regret is greater than our grief, and others for whom our grief is greater than our regret.
 - **4** Usually we only praise heartily those who admire us.
- ♣§ Little minds are too much wounded by little things; great minds see all and are not even hurt.
- 45 Humility is the true proof of Christian virtues; without it we retain all our faults, and they are only covered by pride to hide them from others, and often from ourselves.

- Infidelities should extinguish love, and we ought not to be jealous when we have cause to be so. No persons escape causing jealousy who are worthy of exciting it.
- ■5 We are more humiliated by the least infidelity toward us, than by our greatest toward others.
- ◆§ Most women do not grieve so much for the death of their lovers for love's sake, as to show they were worthy of being beloved.
- ◆5 The evils done us by others give us less pain than those we do to ourselves.
- ◆§ We well know that it is bad taste to talk of our wives; but we do not so well know that it is the same to speak of ourselves.
- 45 However we distrust the sincerity of those whom we talk with, we always believe them more sincere with us than with others.
 - 4δ There are few virtuous women who are not tired of their part.
- 48 The greater number of good women are like concealed treasures: safe, because no one has searched for them.
- 45 The violences we put upon ourselves to escape love are often more cruel than the cruelty of those we love.
 - -δ There are not many cowards who know the whole of their fear.
- વ્હેં It is generally the fault of the loved one not to perceive when love ceases.
- ◆§ Most young people think they are natural when they are only boorish and rude.

- - ◆§ Ordinary men commonly condemn what is beyond them.
 - -δ Envy is destroyed by true friendship, flirtation by true love.
- ◆5 The greatest mistake of penetration is not to have fallen short, but to have gone too far.
 - ◆§ We may bestow advice, but we cannot inspire the conduct.
 - ◆

 § As our merit declines, so also does our taste.
- Fortune makes visible our virtues or our vices, as light does objects.
- **4** The struggle we undergo to remain faithful to one we love is little better than infidelity.
- The desire of talking about ourselves, and of putting our faults in the light we wish them to be seen, forms a great part of our sincerity.
- ◆§ We should only be astonished at still being able to be astonished.
- હઉં It is equally as difficult to be contented when one has too much or too little love.
- salah No people are more often wrong than those who will not allow themselves to be wrong.
- ◆§ If vanity does not overthrow all virtues, at least she makes them totter.
- **♦** What makes the vanity of others unsupportable is that it wounds our own.

- **∞**δ We give up more easily our interest than our taste.
- ◆§ Fortune appears so blind to none as to those to whom she has done no good.
- •§ We should manage fortune like our health, enjoy it when it is good, be patient when it is bad, and never resort to strong remedies but in an extremity.
- ◆§ Awkwardness sometimes disappears in the camp, never in the court.
- ♣§ We are often less unhappy at being deceived by one we love, than on being undeceived.
- •§ We have not the courage to say generally that we have no faults, and that our enemies have no good qualities; but in fact we are not far from believing so.
- ∞5 Of all our faults that which we most readily admit is idleness; we believe that it makes all virtues ineffectual and that, without utterly destroying, it at least suspends their operation.
- There is a kind of greatness which does not depend on our good fortune: it consists in a distinguishing bearing, which seems to destine us for great things; it is the value we unconsciously set upon ourselves; it is by this quality that we gain the deference of other men, and generally it raises us more above them than birth, rank or even merit itself.
- **4** ★§ There may be talent without position, but there is no position without some kind of talent.
 - ◆§ Rank is to merit what dress is to a pretty woman.

- **4** S What we find the least of in flirtation is love.
- Fortune sometimes uses our faults to exalt us, and there are tiresome people whose deserts would be ill rewarded if we did not desire to purchase their absence.
- 45 It appears that nature has hid at the bottom of our hearts talents and abilities unknown to us. It is only the passions that have the power of bringing them to light, and sometimes give us views more true and more perfect than art could possibly do.
- ◆5 We reach quite inexperienced the different stages of life, and often, in spite of the number of our years, we lack experience.
- ◆§ Flirts make it a point of honor to be jealous of their lovers, to conceal their envy of other women.
- as foolish as we seem to ourselves when trapped by the tricks of others.
- The most dangerous folly in elderly people who have once been attractive is to forget that they are no longer so.
- **८** We should often be ashamed of our very best actions if the world only saw the motives which caused them.
- 45 The greatest effort of friendship is not to show our faults to a friend, but to show him his own.
- ◆§ We have few faults which are not far more excusable than the means we adopt to hide them.
- ₩ Whatever disgrace we may have deserved, it is almost always in our power to re-establish our character.
 - ◆§ A man cannot please long who has only one kind of wit.
- •§ The vivacity which increases in old age is not far removed from folly.

- ▲§ In love the quickest is always the best cure.
- ₩5 Young women who do not want to appear flirts, and old men who do not want to appear ridiculous should not talk of love as a matter wherein they can have any interest.
- ◆§ We may seem great in a post beneath our capacity, but we oftener seem little in a post above it.
- 45 We often believe we have constancy in misfortune when we have nothing but debasement; and we suffer misfortunes without regarding as cowards those who let themselves be killed from fear of defending themselves.
 - € Conceit causes more conversation than wit.
- ◆§ All passions make us commit some faults; love alone makes us ridiculous.
 - €§ Few know how to be old.
- **4** We often credit ourselves with vices the reverse of what we have, thus when weak we boast of our obstinacy.
- ▶ Penetration has a spice of divination in it which tickles our vanity more than any other quality of the mind.
- 45 The charm of novelty and old custom, however opposite to each other, equally blind us to the faults of our friends.
- 48 Most friends sicken us of friendship, most devotees of devo-
- ◆§ Women who love pardon more readily great indiscretions than little infidelities.
- 45 In the old age of love as in life we still survive for the evils, though no longer for the pleasures.

- •§ Nothing prevents our being unaffected so much as our desire to seem so.
- **4** To praise good actions heartily is in some measure to take part in them.
- **△**§ The most certain sign of being born with great qualities is to be born without envy.
- when our friends have deceived us we owe them but indifference to the tokens of their friendship, yet for their misfortunes we always owe them pity.
 - ◆§ Luck and caprice rule the world.
 - •§ It is far easier to know men than to know man.
- We should not judge of a man's merit by his great abilities, but by the use he makes of them.
- There is a certain lively gratitude which not only releases us from benefits received, but which also, by making a return to our friends as payment, renders them indebted to us.
- ◆δ We should earnestly desire but few things if we clearly knew what we desired.
- The cause why the majority of women are so little given to friendship is that it is insipid after having felt love.
- 4β As in friendship so in love, we are often happier from ignorance than from knowledge.
 - ■§ We try to make a virtue of vices we are loath to correct.
- •§ The most violent passions give some respite, but vanity always disturbs us.
 - **ఆ**δ Old fools are more foolish than young fools.
 - ◆§ Weakness is more hostile to virtue than vice.

- ₩ What makes the grief of shame and jealousy so acute is that vanity cannot aid us in enduring them.
 - •§ Propriety is the least of all laws, but the most obeyed.
- ◆5 A well-trained mind has less difficulty in submitting to, than in guiding, an ill-trained mind.
- When fortune surprises us by giving us some great office without having gradually led us to expect it, or without having raised our hopes, it is well nigh impossible to occupy it well, and to appear worthy to fill it.
- •§ Our pride is often increased by what we retrench from our other faults.
 - €§ No fools so wearisome as those who have some wit.
- 45 In great matters we should not try so much to create opportunities as to utilize those that offer themselves.
- There are few occasions when we should make a bad bargain by giving up the good on condition that no ill was said of us.
- 45 However disposed the world may be to judge wrongly, it far oftener favors false merit than does justice to true.
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- **⋖**§ We should gain more by letting the world see what we are, than by trying to seem what we are not.
- •§ Our enemies come nearer the truth in the opinions they form of us than we do in our opinion of ourselves.
 - 45 There are many remedies to cure love, yet none is infallible.

- ◆§ Age is a tyrant who forbids at the penalty of life all the pleasures of youth.
- The same pride which makes us blame faults from which we believe ourselves free causes us to despise the good qualities we have not.
- 45 There is often more pride than goodness in our grief for our enemies' miseries; it is to show how superior we are to them that we bestow on them the sign of our compassion.
- ◆5 There exists an excess of good and evil which surpasses our comprehension.
- ◆§ Innocence is most fortunate if it finds the same protection as crime.
- **ఆ**§ Of all the violent passions the one that becomes a woman best is love.
 - ✓§ Vanity makes us sin more against our taste than reason.
 - **⇔**β Some bad qualities form great talents.
 - •§ We never desire carnestly what we desire in reason.
- All our qualities are uncertain and doubtful—both the good as well as the bad, and nearly all are creatures of opportunities.
- As Pride, like the other passions, has its follies. We are ashamed to admit we are jealous, and yet we plume ourselves in having been and being able to be so.
 - 48 However rare true love is, true friendship is rarer.

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 § There are few women whose charm survives their beauty.
- **4**§ The desire to be pitied or to be admired often forms the greater part of our confidence.
- ◆5 Our envy always lasts longer than the happiness of those we envy.
- The same firmness that tends to resist love tends also to make our passion more violent and lasting; weak persons, on the other hand, who are always excited by passions, are seldom really possessed by love.
- ▶ Fancy does not enable us to invent so many different contradictions as there are by nature in every heart.
- ✓⁵ Only strong people can be truly gentle; those who appear gentle are generally weak—and their sweetness readily turns acid.
- Timidity is a fault which is dangerous to blame in those we desire to cure of it.
- A Nothing is rarer than true good nature; those who think they have it are generally only pliant or weak.
- The mind attaches itself by idleness and habit to whatever is easy or pleasant. This habit always places bounds to our knowledge, and no one has ever yet taken the pains to enlarge and expand his mind to the full extent of its capacities.
 - હું Usually we are more satirical from vanity than malice.
- •§ When the heart is still disturbed by the relics of a passion, it is proner to take up a new one than when wholly cured.
- As Those who have had great passions often find their whole lives made miserable in being cured of them.
 - **48** More persons exist without self-love than without envy.
 - ◆§ We have more idleness in the mind than in the body.

- •§ The calm or disturbance of our mind does not depend so much on what we regard as the more important things of life, as in a judicious or injudicious arrangement of the little things of our daily life.
- Description However wicked men may be, they do not dare openly to appear the enemies of virtue, and when they desire to persecute her, they either pretend to believe her false or attribute crimes to her.
- Extreme avarice is nearly always mistaken; there is no passion which is oftener further away from its mark, nor upon which the present has so much power to the prejudice of the future.
- Avarice often produces opposite results: there is an infinite number of persons who sacrifice their property to doubtful and distant expectations; others mistake great future advantages for small present interests.
- ◆§ It appears that men do not find they have enough faults, as they increase the number by certain peculiar qualities that they affect to assume, and which they cultivate with so great assiduity that at length they become natural faults, which they can no longer correct.
- ▶ What makes us see that men know their faults better than we imagine is that they are never wrong when they speak of their conduct; the same self-love that usually blinds them enlightens them and gives them such true views as to make them suppress or disguise the smallest thing that might be censured.
- Young men entering life should be either shy or awestruck; a solemn and sedate manner usually degenerates into impertinence.
 - •§ Quarrels would not last long if the fault was only on one side.
- હ ર્દ્ધ It is valueless to a woman to be young unless pretty, or to be pretty unless young.

- Some persons are so frivolous and fickle that they are as far removed from real defects as from substantial qualities.
- ◆5We do not usually reckon a woman's first flirtation until she has had a second.
- Some people are so self-occupied that when in love they find a mode by which to be engrossed with the passion, without being so with the person they love.
- **4** Love, though so very agreeable, pleases more by its ways than by itself.
- ◆§ A little wit with good sense bores less in the long run than much wit with ill nature.
- ◆5 Jealousy is the worst of all evils, yet the one that is least pitied by those who cause it.
- Thus having treated of the hollowness of so many apparent virtues, it is but just to say something on the hollowness of the contempt for death. I allude to that contempt of death which the heathen boasted they derived from their unaided understanding, without the hope of a future state. There is a difference between meeting death with courage and despising it. The first is common enough; the last, I think, always feigned. Yet everything possible has been written to persuade us that death is no evil, and the weakest of men, equally with the bravest, have given many noble examples on which to found such an opinion; still I do not think that any man of good sense has ever yet believed in it. And the pains we take to persuade others, as well as ourselves, amply show that the task is far from easy. For many reasons we may be disgusted with life, but for none may we despise it.

Not even those who commit suicide regard it as a light matter, and are as much alarmed and startled as the rest of the world if death meets them in a different way than the one they have selected. The difference we observe in the courage of so great a number of brave men is from meeting death in a way different from what they imagined, when it shows itself nearer at one time than at another. Thus it ultimately happens that, having despised death when they were

ignorant of it, they dread it when they become acquainted with it. If we could avoid seeing it with all its surroundings, we might perhaps believe that it was not the greatest of evils. The wisest and bravest are those who take the best means to avoid reflecting on it, as every man who sees it in its real light regards it as dreadful. The necessity of dying created all the constancy of philosophers. They thought it but right to go with a good grace when they could not avoid going, and being unable to prolong their lives indefinitely, nothing remained but to build an immortal reputation, and to save from the general wreck all that could be saved. To put a good face upon it, let it suffice, not to say all that we think to ourselves, but to rely more on our nature than on our fallible reason, which might make us think we could approach death with indifference.

The glory of dying with courage, the hope of being regretted, the desire to leave behind us a good reputation, the assurance of being enfranchised from the miseries of life and being no longer dependent on the wiles of fortune are resources which should not be passed over. But we must not regard them as infallible. They should affect us in the same proportion as a single shelter affects those who in war storm a fortress. At a distance they think it may afford cover, but when near they find it only a feeble protection. It is only deceiving ourselves to imagine that death, when near, will seem the same as at a distance, or that our feelings, which are merely weaknesses, are naturally so strong that they will not suffer in an attack of the rudest of trials. It is equally as absurd to try the effect of self-esteem and to think it will enable us to count as naught what will of necessity destroy it. And the mind in which we trust to find so many resources will be far too weak in the struggle to persuade us in the way we wish. For it is this which betrays us so frequently and which, instead of filling us with contempt of death, serves but to show us all that is frightful and fearful. The most it can do for us is to persuade us to avert our gaze and fix it on other objects. Cato and Brutus each selected noble ones. A lackey some time ago contented himself by dancing on the scaffold when he was about to be broken on the wheel. So however diverse the motives, they but realize the same result.

For the rest it is a fact that whatever difference there may be between the peer and the peasant, we have constantly seen both the one and the other meet death with the same composure. Still there is always this difference: that the contempt the peer shows for death is

but the love of fame, which hides death from his sight; in the peasant it is but the result of his limited vision that hides from him the extent of the evil and leaves him free to reflect on other things.

THE FIRST SUPPLEMENT

Self-love is the love of self and of all things for self. It makes men self-worshipers, and if fortune permits them, causes them to tyrannize over others; it is never quiet when out of itself, and only rests upon other subjects as a bee upon flowers, to extract from them its proper food. Nothing is so headstrong as its desires, nothing so well concealed as its designs, nothing so skillful as its management; its suppleness is beyond description; its changes surpass those of the metamorphoses, its refinements those of chemistry.

We can neither plumb the depths nor pierce the shades of its recesses. Therein it is hidden from the most far-seeing eyes; therein it takes a thousand imperceptible folds. There it is often to itself invisible; it there conceives, there nourishes and rears, without being aware of it, numberless loves and hatreds, some so monstrous that when they are brought to light, it disowns them and cannot resolve to avow them. In the night which covers it are born the ridiculous persuasions it has of itself; thence come its errors, its ignorance, its silly mistakes; thence it is led to believe that its passions which sleep are dead, and to think that it has lost all appetite for that of which it is sated. But this thick darkness which conceals it from itself does not hinder it from seeing that perfectly which is out of itself; and in this it resembles our eyes, which behold all and yet cannot see their own forms. In fact, in great concerns and important matters when the violence of its desires summons all its attention, it sees, feels, hears, imagines, suspects, penetrates, divines all; so that we might think that each of its passions had a magic power proper to it.

Nothing is so close and strong as its attachments, which, in sight of the extreme misfortunes which threaten it, it vainly attempts to break. Yet sometimes it effects without trouble and quickly that which it failed to do with its whole power and in the course of years; whence we may fairly conclude that it is by itself that its desires are inflamed, rather than by the beauty and merit of its objects; that its own taste embellishes and heightens them; that it is itself the game it

pursues, and that it follows eagerly when it runs after that upon which itself is eager. It is made up of contraries. It is imperious and obedient, sincere and false, piteous and cruel, timid and bold.

It has different desires according to the diversity of temperaments, which turn and fix it sometimes upon riches, sometimes on pleasures. It changes according to our age, our fortunes and our hopes; it is quite indifferent whether it has many or one, because it can split itself into many portions and unite in one as it pleases. It is inconstant and, besides the changes which arise from strange causes, it has an infinity born of itself and of its own substance. It is inconstant through inconstancy of lightness, love, novelty, lassitude and distaste. It is capricious, and one sees it sometimes work with intense eagerness and with incredible labor to obtain things of little use to it which are even hurtful, but which it pursues because it wishes for them. It is silly, and often throws its whole application on the utmost frivolities. It finds all its pleasure in the dullest matters and places its pride in the most contemptible.

It is seen in all states of life and in all conditions; it lives everywhere and upon everything; it subsists on nothing; it accommodates itself either to things or to the want of them; it goes over to those who are at war with it, enters into their designs and (this is wonderful) it, with them, hates even itself! It conspires for its own loss, it works towards its own ruin—in fact, caring only to exist and providing that it may be, it will be its own enemy! We must therefore not be surprised if it is sometimes united to the rudest austerity, and if it enters so boldly into partnership to destroy her, because when it is rooted out in one place, it re-establishes itself in another. When it fancies that it abandons its pleasure, it merely changes or suspends its enjoyment. When even it is conquered in its full flight, we find that it triumphs in its own defeat.

Here then is the picture of self-love whereof the whole of our life is but one long agitation. The sea is its living image; and in the flux and reflux of its continuous waves, there is a faithful expression of the stormy succession of its thoughts and of its eternal motion.

- Passions are only the different degrees of the heat or coldness of the blood.
- ◆§ Moderation in good fortune is but apprehension of the shame which follows elation, or a fear of losing what we have.

- ◆§ Moderation is like temperance in eating: we could eat more but we fear to make ourselves ill.
- § Everybody finds in others the faults which are found in himself.
- ◆§ Pride, as if tired of its artifices and its different metamorphoses, after having solely filled the diverse parts of the comedy of life, exhibits itself with its natural face and is discovered by haughtiness; so much so that we may truly say that haughtiness is but the flash and open declaration of pride.
- •§ One kind of happiness is to know exactly at what point to be miserable.
- **⋖**§ When we do not find peace of mind in ourselves, it is useless to seek it elsewhere.
- **4**δ Love is to the soul of him who loves what the soul is to the body which it animates.
- As one is never at liberty to love or to cease from loving, the lover cannot with justice complain of the inconstancy of his mistress, nor she of the fickleness of her lover.
- ✓§ Justice in those judges who are moderate is but a love of their place.
- \$\sim \\$\\$ The first impulse of joy which we feel at the happiness of our friends arises neither from our natural goodness nor from friendship; it is the result of self-love, which flatters us with being lucky in our own turn, or in reaping something from the good fortune of our friends.
- ५§ In the adversity of our best friends we always find something which is not wholly displeasing to us.
- ◆§ How shall we hope that another person will keep our secret if we do not keep it ourselves?

- As if it was not sufficient that self-love should have the power to change itself, it has added that of changing other objects, and this it does in a very astonishing manner; for not only does it so well disguise them that it is itself deceived, but it even changes the state and nature of things. Thus, when a female is adverse to us, and she turns her hate and persecution against us, self-love pronounces on her actions with all the severity of justice; it exaggerates the faults till they are enormous, and looks at her good qualities in so disadvantageous a light that they become more displeasing than her faults. If however the same female becomes favorable to us, or certain of our interests reconcile her to us, our sole self-interest gives her back the luster which our hatred deprived her of. The bad qualities become effaced; the good ones appear with a redoubled advantage; we even summon all our indulgence to justify the war she has made upon us. Now although all passions prove this truth, that of love exhibits it most clearly; for we may see a lover moved with rage by the neglect or the infidelity of her whom he loves, and meditating the utmost vengeance that his passion can inspire. Nevertheless as soon as the sight of his beloved has calmed the fury of his movements, his passion holds that beauty innocent; he only accuses himself; he condemns his condemnations, and by the miraculous power of self-love, he whitens the blackest actions of his mistress, and takes from her all crime to lay it on himself.
- There are none who press so heavily on others as the lazy ones when they have satisfied their idleness and wish to appear industrious.
- The blindness of men is the most dangerous effect of their pride; it seems to nourish and augment it; it deprives us of knowledge of remedies which can solace our miseries and can cure our faults.
- •§ One has never less reason than when one despairs of finding it in others.
- Philosophers, and Seneca above all, have not diminished crimes by their precepts; they have only used them in the building up of pride.
- ■§ It is a proof of little friendship not to perceive the growing coolness of that of our friends.

- 45 The most wise may be so in indifferent and ordinary matters, but they are seldom so in their most serious affairs.

 - Sobriety is the love of health, or an incapacity to eat much.
- ◆§ We never forget things so well as when we are tired of talking of them.
- 45 The praise bestowed upon us is at least useful in rooting us in the practice of virtue.
- ◆§ Self-love takes care to prevent him whom we flatter from being him who most flatters us.
 - ◆§ Men only blame vice and praise virtue from interest.
- ♣§ We make no difference in the kinds of anger, although there is that which is light and almost innocent, which arises from warmth of complexion, temperament, and another very criminal, which is, to speak properly, the fury of pride.
- **ఆ**§ Great souls are not those who have fewer passions and more virtues than the common, but those only who have greater designs.
- ▶ Kings do with men as with pieces of money; they make them bear what value they will, and one is forced to receive them according to their currency value, and not at their true worth.
 - ◆§ Natural ferocity makes fewer people cruel than self-love.
- ◆§ One may say of all our virtues as an Italian poet says of the propriety of women that it is often merely the art of appearing chaste.
- There are crimes which become innocent and even glorious by their brilliancy, their number or their excess; thus it happens that public robbery is called financial skill, and the unjust capture of provinces is called a conquest.

- ◆§ One never finds in man good or evil in excess.
- ◆§ Those who are incapable of committing great crimes do not easily suspect others.
- √a

 § The pomp of funerals concerns rather the vanity of the living than the honor of the dead.
- →δ Whatever variety and change appear in the world, we may remark a secret chain, and a regulated order of all time by Providence, which makes everything follow in due rank and fall into its destined course.
- Intrepidity should sustain the heart in conspiracies in place of valor, which alone furnishes all the firmness which is necessary for the perils of war.
- ♣§ Those who wish to define victory by her birth will be tempted to imitate the poets, and to call her the daughter of heaven, since they cannot find her origin on earth. Truly she is produced from an infinity of actions, which instead of wishing to beget her, only look to the particular interests of their masters, since all those who compose an army, in aiming at their own rise and glory, produce a good so great and general.
- ◆

 § That man who has never been in danger cannot answer for his courage.
- અંદ્રે We more often place bounds on our gratitude than on our desires and our hopes.
- ■§ Imitation is always unhappy, for all which is counterfeit displeases by the very things which charm us when they are original.
- which we believed we had impressed them of our worth.

- ◆5 For us to be always good, others should believe that they cannot behave wickedly to us with impunity.
- ◆ A confidence in being able to please is often an infallible means of being displeasing.
- ◆§ The confidence we have in ourselves arises in a great measure from that which we have in others.
- 45 There is a general revolution which changes the tastes of the mind as well as the fortunes of the world.
- The foundation of perfect beauty is truth, for whatever stature a thing may have, it cannot be beautiful and perfect unless it be truly what it should be.
- Magnanimity is a noble effort of pride which makes a man master of himself in order to make him master of all things.
- Luxury and too refined a policy in states are a sure presage of their fall, because all parties looking after their own interest turn away from the public good.
- So of all passions, that which is least known to us is idleness; she is the most ardent and evil of all, although her violence may be insensible, and the evils she causes are concealed; if we consider her power attentively, we shall find that in all encounters she makes herself mistress of our sentiments, our interests and our pleasures; like the fabled remora,* she can stop the greatest vessels; she is a hidden rock, more dangerous in the most important matters than sudden squalls and the most violent tempests. The repose of idleness is a magic charm which suddenly suspends the most ardent pursuits and the most obstinate resolutions. In fact to give a true notion of this passion, we must add that idleness, like a beatitude of the soul, consoles us for all losses and fills the vacancy of all our wants.

^{*} A fish which attaches itself to ships or other fish

- ◆§ We are very fond of reading others' characters, but we do not like to be read ourselves.
- ◆§ What a tiresome disease is that which forces one to preserve his health by a regimen.
- ▶§ It is much easier to take love when one is free, than to get rid of it after having taken it.
- weakness than from passion. Whence it is that bold and pushing men succeed better than others, although they are not so lovable.
 - ∞§ Not to love is, in love, an infallible means of being loved.
- 45 The most just comparison of love is that of a fever, and we have no power over either, as to its violence or its duration.
- ◆§ The greatest skill of the least skillfull is to know how to submit to the direction of another.
- **45** We always fear to see those whom we love when we have been flirting with others.
- We ought to console ourselves for our faults when we have strength enough to admit them.

SECOND SUPPLEMENT

deprived of its soul is without sight, feeling or knowledge, without thought or movement, so self-love, riven, so to speak, from its interest, neither sees, nor hears, nor smells, nor moves; thus it is that the same man who will run over land and sea for his own interest becomes suddenly paralyzed when engaged for that of others; from this arises that sudden dullness and, as it were, death, with which we afflict those to whom we speak of our own matters; from this also their sudden resurrection when in our narrative we relate something concerning them; from this we find in our conversations and business that a man be-

comes dull or bright just as his own interest is near to him or distant from him.

- ◆§ Why we cry out so much against maxims which lay bare the heart of man is because we fear that our own heart shall be laid bare.
 - ◆
 § Hope and fear are inseparable.
- when this is done, the actor takes very little pain to make the enterprise succeed in which he is engaged, and certain it is that they who hazard their lives to take a city or to conquer a province are better officers, have more merit and wider and more useful views than they who merely expose themselves to vindicate their honor; it is very common to find people of the latter class, very rare to find those of the former.
 - **∞**δ The taste changes, but the will remains the same.
- ₹ The power which women whom we love have over us is greater than that which we have over ourselves.
- 45 That which makes us believe so easily that others have defects is that we all so easily believe what we wish.
- 45 I am perfectly aware that good sense and fine wit are tedious to every age, but tastes are not always the same, and what is good at one time will not seem so at another. This makes me think that few persons know how to be old.
- •§ God has permitted, to punish man for his original sin, that he should be so fond of his self-love that he should be tormented by it in all the actions of his life.

THIRD SUPPLEMENT

- ■§ Many persons wish to be devout; but no one wishes to be humble.
- ₹ The labor of the body frees us from the pains of the mind, and thus makes the poor happy.

- True penitential sorrows (mortifications) are those which are not known; vanity renders the others easy enough.
- 45 Humility is the altar upon which God wishes that we should offer him his sacrifices.
- Few things are needed to make a wise man happy; nothing can make a fool content; that is why most men are miserable.
- **ఆ**§ We trouble ourselves less to become happy, than to make others believe we are so.
- - S Wisdom is to the soul what health is to the body.
- The great ones of the earth can neither command health of body nor repose of mind, and they buy always at too dear a price the good they can acquire.
- ⊯§ Before strongly desiring anything, we should examine what happiness he has who possesses it.
- A true friend is the greatest of all goods, and that of which we think least of acquiring.
- Prudence and love are not made for each other; in the ratio that love increases, prudence diminishes.
- વર્ક It is sometimes pleasing to a husband to have a jealous wife; he hears her always speaking of the beloved object.
- ▶ How much is a woman to be pitied who is at the same time possessed of virtue and of love!
- $\blacktriangleleft \delta$ The wise man finds it better not to enter the encounter than to conquer.

- ५ Good and evil ordinarily come to those who have most of one or the other.
 - ◆§ If we think we love for love's sake, we are much mistaken.
- ◆§ The restraint we lay upon ourselves to be constant is not much better than an inconstancy.
- ◆5 There are those who avoid our jealousy, of whom we ought to be jealous.
- ⇔§ When we love too much, it is difficult to discover when we have ceased to be loved.
 - A Chance makes us known to others and to ourselves.
 - ◆§ Man only blames himself in order that he may be praised.
 - **4** 5 We are always bored by those whom we bore.
- 45 It is never more difficult to speak well than when we are ashamed of being silent.
- •§ Those faults are always pardonable that we have the courage to avow.
- •§ There is nothing more natural, nor more deceptive, than to believe that we are loved.
- ◆§ We would rather see those to whom we have done a benefit, than those who have done us one.
- **⋖**§ It is more difficult to hide the opinions we have, than to feign those which we have not.

- A Renewed friendships require more care than those that have never been broken.
- ◆§ A man to whom no one is pleasing is much more unhappy than one who pleases nobody.

REFLECTIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS

1. On Confidence

THOUGH SINCERITY AND CONFIDENCE have many points of resemblance, they have yet many points of difference.

Sincerity is an openness of heart which shows us what we are, a love of truth, a dislike to deception, a wish to compensate our faults and to lessen them by the merit of confessing them.

Confidence leaves us less liberty; its rules are stricter, it requires more prudence and reticence, and we are not always free to give it. It relates not only to ourselves, since our interests are often mixed up with those of others; it requires great delicacy not to expose our friends in exposing ourselves, not to draw upon their goodness to enhance the value of what we give.

Confidence always pleases those who receive it. It is a tribute we pay to their merit, a deposit we commit to their trust, a pledge which gives them a claim upon us, a kind of dependence to which we voluntarily submit. I do not wish from what I have said to depreciate confidence, so necessary to man. It is in society the link between acquaintance and friendship. I only wish to state its limits to make it true and real. I would that it was always sincere, always discreet, and that it had neither weakness nor interest. I know it is hard to place proper limits on being taken into all our friends' confidence, and taking them into all ours.

Most frequently we make confidents from vanity, a love of talking, a wish to win the confidence of others, and make an exchange of secrets.

Some may have a motive for confiding in us, toward whom we have no motive for confiding. With them we discharge the obligation in keeping their secrets and trusting them with small confidences.

Others whose fidelity we know trust nothing to us, but we confide in them by choice and inclination.

We should hide from them nothing that concerns us; we should al-

ways show them with equal truth our virtues and our vices, without exaggerating the one or diminishing the other. We should make it a rule never to have half-confidences. They always embarrass those who give them, and dissatisfy those who receive them. They shed an uncertain light on what we want hidden, increase curiosity, entitling the recipients to know more, giving them leave to consider themselves free to talk of what they have guessed. It is far safer and more honest to tell nothing than to be silent when we have begun to tell. There are other rules to be observed in matters confided to us; all are important; to all prudence and trust are essential.

Everyone agrees that a secret should be kept intact, but everyone does not agree as to the nature and importance of secrecy. Too often we consult ourselves as to what we should say, what we should leave unsaid. There are few permanent secrets, and the scruple against revealing them will not last forever.

With those friends whose truth we know, we have the closest intimacy. They have always spoken unreservedly to us; we should always do the same to them. They know our habits and connections, and see too clearly not to perceive the slightest change. They may have elsewhere learned what we have promised not to tell. It is not in our power to tell them what has been entrusted to us, though it might tend to their interest to know it. We feel as confident of them as of ourselves, and we are reduced to the hard fate of losing their friendship, which is dear to us, or of being faithless as regards a secret. This is doubtless the hardest test of fidelity, but it should not move an honest man; it is then that he can sacrifice himself to others. His first duty is to rigidly keep his trust in its entirety. He should not only control and guard his words and his voice, but even his lighter talk, so that nothing be seen in his conversation or manner that could direct the curiosity of others towards that which he wishes to conceal.

We have often need of strength and prudence wherewith to oppose the exigencies of most of our friends who make a claim on our confidence and seek to know all about us. We should never allow them to acquire this unexceptionable right. There are accidents and circumstances which do not fall in their cognizance; if they complain, we should endure their complaints and excuse ourselves with gentleness, but if they are still unreasonable, we should sacrifice their friendship to our duty and choose between two inevitable evils: the one reparable, the other irreparable.

II. On Difference of Character

Although all the qualities of mind may be united in a great genius, yet there are some which are special and peculiar to him: his views are unlimited; he always acts uniformly and with the same activity; he sees distant objects as if present; he comprehends and grasps the greatest, sees and notices the smallest matters; his thoughts are elevated, broad, just and intelligible. Nothing escapes his observation, and he often finds truth in spite of the obscurity that hides her from others.

A lofty mind always thinks nobly; it easily creates vivid, agreeable and natural fancies, places them in their best light, clothes them with all appropriate adornments, studies others' tastes and clears away from its own thoughts all that is useless and disagreeable.

A clever, pliant, winning mind knows how to avoid and overcome difficulties. Bending easily to what it wants, it understands the inclination and temper it is dealing with, and by managing their interests it advances and establishes its own.

A well-regulated mind sees all things as they should be seen, appraises them at their proper value, turns them to its own advantage and adheres firmly to its own opinions, as it knows all their force and weight.

A difference exists between a working mind and a businesslike mind. We can undertake business without turning it to our own interest. Some are clever only in what does not concern them, and the reverse in all that does. There are others again whose cleverness is limited to their own business, and who know how to turn everything to their own advantage.

It is possible to have a serious turn of mind and yet to talk pleasantly and cheerfully. This class of mind is suited to all persons in all times of life. Young persons have usually a cheerful and satirical turn, untempered by seriousness, thus often making themselves disagreeable.

No part is easier to play than that of being always pleasant; and the applause we sometimes receive in censuring others is not worth being exposed to the chance of offending them when they are out of temper.

Satire is at once the most agreeable and most dangerous of mental qualities. It always pleases when it is refined, but we always fear those who use it too much; yet satire should be allowed when unmixed with spite, and when the person satirized can join in the satire.

It is unfortunate to have a satirical turn without affecting to be pleased or without loving to jest. It requires much adroitness to continue satirical without falling into one of these extremes.

Raillery is a kind of mirth which takes possession of the imagination and shows every object in an absurd light; wit combines more or less softness or harshness.

There is a kind of refined and flattering raillery that only hits the faults that persons admit, which understands how to hide the praise it gives under the appearance of blame, and shows the good while feigning a wish to hide it.

An acute mind and a cunning mind are very dissimilar. The first always pleases; it is unfettered, it perceives the most delicate and sees the most imperceptible matters. A cunning spirit never goes straight; it endeavors to secure its object by byways and short cuts. This conduct is soon found out; it always gives rise to distrust and never reaches greatness.

There is a difference between an ardent and a brilliant mind: a fiery spirit travels farther and faster, while a brilliant mind is sparkling, attractive, accurate.

Gentleness of mind is an easy and accommodating manner which always pleases when not insipid.

A mind full of details devotes itself to the management and regulation of the smallest particulars it meets with. This distinction is usually limited to little matters, yet it is not absolutely incompatible with

greatness, and when these two qualities are united in the same mind, they raise it infinitely above others.

The expression bel esprit * is much perverted, for all that one can say of the different kinds of mind meet together in the bel esprit. Yet as the epithet is bestowed on an infinite number of bad poets and tedious authors, it is more often used to ridicule than to praise.

There are yet many other epithets for the mind which mean the same thing; the difference lies in the tone and manner of saying them, but as tones and manner cannot appear in writing, I shall not go into distinctions I cannot explain. Custom explains this in saying that a man has wit, has much wit, that he is a great wit; there are tones and manners which make all the difference between phrases which seem all alike on paper and yet express a different order of mind.

So we say that a man has only one kind of wit, that he has several, that he has every variety of wit.

One can be a fool with much wit, and one need not be a fool even with very little wit.

To have much mind is a doubtful expression. It may mean every class of mind that can be mentioned; it may mean none in particular. It may mean that he talks sensibly while he acts foolishly. We may have a mind, but a narrow one. A mind may be fitted for some things, not for others. We may have a large measure of mind fitted for nothing, and one is often inconvenienced with much mind; still of this kind of mind we may say that it is sometimes pleasing in society.

Though the gifts of the mind are infinite, they can, it seems to me, be thus classified:

There are some so beautiful that everyone can see and feel their beauty.

There are some lovely, it is true, but which are wearisome.

There are some which are lovely, which all the world admire, but without knowing why.

* A person of delicate, graceful wit

There are some so refined and delicate that few are capable even of remarking all their beauties.

There are others which, though imperfect, yet are produced with such skill, and sustained and managed with such sense and grace that they even deserve to be admired.

III. On Taste

Some persons have more wit than taste; others have more taste than wit. There are greater vanity and caprice in taste than in wit.

The word taste has different meanings which it is easy to mistake. There is a difference between the taste which in certain objects has an attraction for us and the taste that makes us understand and distinguish the qualities we judge by.

We may like a comedy without having a sufficiently fine and delicate taste to criticize it accurately. Some tastes lead us imperceptibly to objects, from which others carry us away by their force or intensity.

Some persons have bad taste in everything; others have bad taste only in some things, but a correct and good taste in matters within their capacity. Some have peculiar taste, which they know to be bad, but which they still follow. Some have a doubtful taste and let chance decide; their indecision makes them change, and they are affected with pleasure or weariness on their friends' judgment. Others are always prejudiced; they are the slaves of their tastes, which they adhere to in everything. Some know what is good and are horrified at what is not; their opinions are clear and true, and they find the reason for their taste in their mind and understanding.

Some have a species of instinct (the source of which they are ignorant of) and decide all questions that come before them by its aid and always decide rightly.

These follow their taste more than their intelligence because they do not permit their temper and self-love to prevail over their natural

discernment. All they do is in harmony, all is in the same spirit. This harmony makes them decide correctly on matters and form a correct estimate of their value. But speaking generally there are few who have a taste fixed and independent of that of their friends; they follow example and fashion, which generally form the standard of taste.

In all the diversities of taste that we discern, it is very rare and almost impossible to meet with that sort of good taste that knows how to set a price on the particular, and yet understands the right value that should be placed on all. Our knowledge is too limited, and that correct discernment of good qualities which goes to form a correct judgment is too seldom to be met with, except in regard to matters that do not concern us.

As regards ourselves, our taste has not this all-important discernment. Preoccupation, trouble, all that concern us, present it to us in another aspect. We do not see with the same eyes what does and what does not relate to us. Our taste is guided by the bent of our self-love and temper, which supply us with new views which we adapt to an infinite number of changes and uncertainties. Our taste is no longer our own; we cease to control it; without our consent it changes, and the same objects appear to us in such diverse aspects that ultimately we fail to perceive what we have seen and heard.

IV. On'Society

In speaking of society my plan is not to speak of friendship, for, though they have some connection, they are yet very different. The former has more in it of greatness and humility, and the greatest merit of the latter is to resemble the former.

For the present I shall speak of that particular kind of intercourse that gentlemen should have with one another. It would be idle to show how far society is essential to men: all seek for it and all find it, but few adopt the method of making it pleasant and lasting.

Everyone seeks to find his pleasure and his advantage at the expense of others. We prefer ourselves always to those with whom we intend to live, and they almost always perceive the preference. It is

this which disturbs and destroys society. We should discover a means to hide this love of selection since it is too ingrained in us to be in our power to destroy. We should make our pleasure that of other persons, to humor, never to wound their self-love.

The mind has a great part to do in so great a work, but it is not merely sufficient for us to guide it in the different courses it should hold.

The agreement we meet between minds would not keep society together for long if it was not governed and sustained by good sense, temper and by the consideration which ought to exist between persons who have to live together.

It sometimes happens that persons opposite in temper and mind become united. They doubtless hold together for different reasons, which cannot last for long. Society may subsist between those who are our inferiors by birth or by personal qualities, but those who have these advantages should not abuse them. They should seldom let it be perceived that they serve to instruct others. They should let their conduct show that they too have need to be guided and led by reason, and accommodate themselves as far as possible to the feelings and the interests of the others.

To make society pleasant, it is essential that each should retain his freedom of action. A man should not see himself, or he should see himself without dependence, and at the same time amuse himself. He should have the power of separating himself without that separation bringing any change on the society. He should have the power to pass by one and the other, if he does not wish to expose himself to occasional embarrassments; and he should remember that he is often bored when he believes he has not the power even to bore. He should share in what he believes to be the amusement of persons with whom he wishes to live, but he should not always be liable to the trouble of providing them.

Complaisance is essential in society, but it should have its limits; it becomes a slavery when it is extreme. We should so render a free consent, that in following the opinion of our friends they should believe that they follow ours.

We should readily excuse our friends when their faults are born with them, and they are less than their good qualities. We should often avoid to show what they have said and what they have left unsaid. We should try to make them perceive their faults, so as to give them the merit of correcting them

There is a kind of politeness which is necessary in the intercourse among gentlemen; it makes them comprehend badinage, and it keeps them from using and employing certain figures of speech, too rude and unrefined, which are often used thoughtlessly when we hold to our opinion with too much warmth.

The intercourse of gentlemen cannot subsist without a certain kind of confidence; this should be equal on both sides. Each should have an appearance of sincerity and of discretion, which never cause the fear of anything imprudent being said.

There should be some variety in wit. Those who have only one kind of wit cannot please for long unless they can take different roads, and not both use the same talents, thus adding to the pleasure of society and keeping the same harmony that different voices and different instruments should observe in music; and as it is detrimental to the quiet of society that many persons should have the same interests, it is yet as necessary for it that their interests should not be different.

We should anticipate what can please our friends, find out how to be useful to them so as to exempt them from annoyance, and when we cannot avert evils, seem to participate in them, insensibly obliterate without attempting to destroy them at a blow, and place agreeable objects in their place, or at least such as will interest them. We should talk of subjects that concern them, but only so far as they like, and we should take great care where we draw the line. There is a species of politeness, and we may say a similar species of humanity, which does not enter too quickly into the recesses of the heart. It often takes pains to allow us to see all that our friends know, while they have still the advantage of not knowing to the full when we have penetrated the depth of the heart.

Thus the intercourse between gentlemen at once gives them familiarity and furnishes them with an infinite number of subjects on which to talk freely.

Few persons have sufficient tact and good sense to appreciate fairly many matters that are essential to maintain society. We desire to turn away at a certain point, but we do not want to be mixed up in everything, and we fear to know all kinds of truth.

As we should stand at a certain distance to view objects, so we should also stand at a distance to observe society; each has its proper point of view from which it should be regarded. It is quite right that it should not be looked at too closely, for there is hardly a man who in all matters allows himself to be seen as he really is.

V. On Conversation

The reason why so few persons are agreeable in conversation is that each thinks more of what he desires to say than of what the others say, and that we make bad listeners when we want to speak.

Yet it is necessary to listen to those who talk; we should give them the time they want and let them say even senseless things; never contradict or interrupt them; on the contrary, we should enter into their mind and taste, illustrate their meaning, praise anything they say that deserves praise and let them see we praise more from our choice than from agreement with them.

To please others we should talk on subjects they like and that interest them, avoid disputes upon indifferent matters, seldom ask questions and never let them see that we pretend to be better informed than they are.

We should talk in a more or less serious manner and upon more or less abstruse subjects, according to the temper and understanding of the persons we talk with, and readily give them the advantage of deciding without obliging them to answer when they are not anxious to talk.

After having in this way fulfilled the duties of politeness, we can speak our opinions to our listeners when we find an opportunity without a sign of presumption or opinionatedness. Above all things we should avoid talking often of ourselves and giving ourselves as an ex-

ample; nothing is more tiresome than a man who quotes himself for everything.

We cannot give too great study to find out the manner and the capacity of those with whom we talk, so as to join in the conversation of those who have more than ourselves without hurting by this preference the wishes or interests of others.

Then we should modestly use all the modes above-mentioned to show our thoughts to them and make them, if possible, believe that we take our ideas from them.

We should never say anything with an air of authority, nor show any superiority of mind. We should avoid farfetched expressions, expressions hard or forced, and never let the words be grander than the matter.

It is not wrong to retain our opinions if they are reasonable, but we should yield to reason wherever she appears and from whatever side she comes; she alone should govern our opinions; we should follow her without opposing the opinions of others, and without seeming to ignore what they say.

It is dangerous to seek to be always the leader of the conversation and to push a good argument too hard when we have found one. Civility often hides half its understanding, and when it meets with an opinionated man who defends the bad side, spares him the disgrace of giving way.

We are sure to displease when we speak too long and too often of one subject, and when we try to turn the conversation upon subjects that we think more instructive than others. We should enter willingly upon every subject that is agreeable to others, stopping where they wish and avoiding all they do not agree with.

Every kind of conversation, however witty it may be, is not equally fitted for all clever persons; we should select what is to their taste and suitable to their condition, their sex, their talents, and also choose the time to say it.

We should observe the place, the occasion, the temper in which we find the person who listens to us; for if there is much art in speaking to the purpose, there is no less in knowing when to be silent. There is an eloquent silence which serves to approve or to condemn; there is a silence of discretion and of respect. In a word, there is a tone, an air, a manner which renders everything in conversation agreeable or disagreeable, refined or vulgar.

But it is given to few persons to keep this secret well. Those who lay down rules too often break them, and the safest we are able to give is to listen much, to speak little and to say nothing that will ever give ground for regret.

VI. Falsehood

We are false in different ways. There are some men who are false from wishing always to appear what they are not. There are some who have better faith, who are born false, who deceive themselves and who never see themselves as they really are; to some is given a true understanding and a false taste; others have a false understanding and some correctness in taste; there are some who have not any falsity either in taste or mind. These last are very rare, for to speak generally, there is no one who has not some falseness in some corner of his mind or his taste.

What makes this falseness so universal is that, as our qualities are uncertain and confused, so too are our tastes; we do not see things exactly as they are; we value them more or less than they are worth and do not bring them into unison with ourselves in a manner which suits them or suits our condition or qualities.

This mistake gives rise to an infinite number of falsities in the taste and in the mind. Our self-love is flattered by all that presents itself to us under the guise of good.

But as there are many kinds of good which affect our vanity and our temper, so they are often followed from custom or advantage. We follow because the others follow, without considering that the same feeling ought not to be equally embarrassing to all kinds of persons,

and that it should attach itself more or less firmly, according as persons agree more or less with those who follow them.

We dread still more to show falseness in taste than in mind. Gentleness should approve without prejudice what deserves to be approved, follow what deserves to be followed and take offense at nothing. But there should be great distinction and great accuracy. We should distinguish between what is good in the abstract and what is good for ourselves, and always follow in reason the natural inclination which carries us toward matters that please us.

If men only wished to excel by the help of their own talents and in following their duty, there would be nothing false in their taste or in their conduct. They would show what they were, they would judge matters by their lights and they would attract by their reason. There would be a discernment in their views, in their sentiments; their taste would be true; it would come to them direct, and not from others; they would follow from choice and not from habit or chance. If we are false in admiring what should not be admired, it is oftener from envy that we affix a value to qualities which are good in themselves, but which do not become us. A magistrate is false when he flatters himself that he is brave and that he will be able to be bold in certain cases. He should be as firm and steadfast in a plot which ought to be stifled without fear of being false, as he would be false and absurd in fighting a duel about it.

A woman may like science, but all sciences are not suitable for her, and the doctrines of certain sciences never become her, and when applied by her are always false.

We should allow reason and good sense to fix the value of things; they should determine our taste and give things the merit they deserve and the importance it is fitting we should give them. But nearly all men are deceived in the price and in the value, and in these mistakes there is always a kind of falseness.

VII. On Air and Manner

There is an air which belongs to the figure and talents of each individual; we always lose it when we abandon it to assume another.

We should try to find out what air is natural to us and never abandon it, but make it as perfect as we can. This is the reason that the majority of children please. It is because they are wrapped up in the air and manner nature has given them, and are ignorant of any other. They are changed and corrupted when they quit infancy; they think they should imitate what they see, and they are not altogether able to imitate it. In this imitation there is always something of falsity and uncertainty. They have nothing settled in their manner and opinions. Instead of being in reality what they want to appear, they seek to appear what they are not.

All men want to be different and to be greater than they are; they seek for an air other than their own and a mind different from what they possess; they take their style and manner at chance. They make experiments upon themselves without considering that what suits one person will not suit everyone, that there is no universal rule for taste or manners and that there are no good copies.

Few men, nevertheless, can have unison in many matters without being a copy of each other, if each follow his natural turn of mind. But in general a person will not wholly follow it. He loves to imitate. We often imitate the same person without perceiving it, and we neglect our own good qualities for the good qualities of others, which generally do not suit us.

I do not pretend, from what I say, that each should wrap himself up in himself so as not to be able to follow example, or to add to his own habits, useful and serviceable ones which nature has not given him. Arts and sciences may be proper for the greater part of those who are capable for them. Good manners and politeness are proper for all the world. But yet acquired qualities should always have a certain agreement and a certain union with our own natural qualities, which they imperceptibly extend and increase. We are elevated to a rank and dignity above ourselves. We are often engaged in a new profession for which nature has not adapted us. All these conditions have each an air which belongs to them, but which does not always agree with our natural manner. This change of our fortune often changes our air and our manners, and augments the air of dignity, which is always false when it is too marked and when it is not united and amalgamated with that which nature has given us. We should

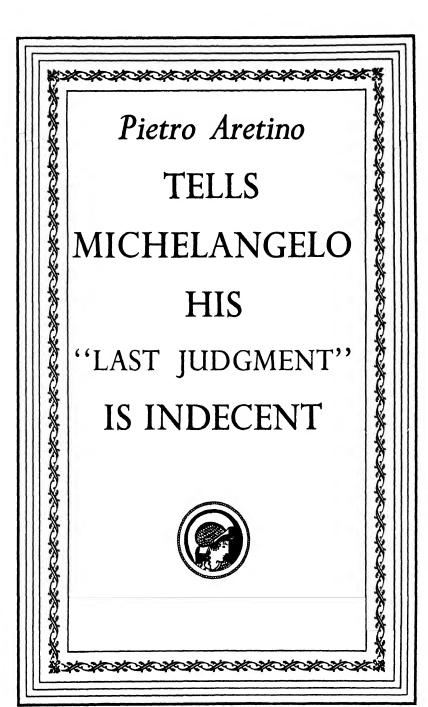
unite and blend them together, and thus render them such that they can never be separated.

We should not speak of all subjects in one tone and in the same manner. We do not march at the head of a regiment as we walk on a promenade; and we should use the same style in which we should naturally speak of different things in the same way, with the same difference as we should walk, as is suitable, either at the head of a regiment or on a promenade. There are some who are not content to abandon the air and manner natural to them to assume those of the rank and dignities to which they have arrived. There are some who assume prematurely the air of the dignities and rank to which they aspire. How many lieutenant generals assume to be marshals of France; how many barristers vainly repeat the style of the chancellor and how many female citizens give themselves the airs of duchesses?

But what we are most often vexed at is that no one knows how to conform his air and manners with his appearance, nor his style and words with his thoughts and sentiments; that everyone forgets himself and how far he is insensibly removed from the truth. Nearly everyone falls into this fault in some way. No one has an ear sufficiently fine to mark perfectly this kind of cadence.

Thousands of people with good qualities are displeasing; thousands pleasing with far less abilities, and why? Because the first wish to appear to be what they are not and the second are what they appear.

Some of the advantages or disadvantages that we have received from nature please in proportion as we know the air, the style, the manner, the sentiments that coincide with our condition and our appearance, and displease in the proportion they are removed from that point.



HOME COURSE APPRECIATION



PIETRO ARETINO WAS AN EPICURE, a Casanova and a fop. There was nothing dainty about his sensual tastes and pleasures, any more than there was any elegance to his mountainous physique or polish to his racy prose.

Born in Arezzo in 1492, the illegitimate son of a shoemaker, he achieved notoriety by his acid pen and devastating tongue. By publishing caustic epigrams, obscene satires and libelous private letters, he exposed the famous men of his day. (To be just, it must also be admitted that he attacked many vicious men who deserved his scorn.) He was afraid of no one, neither king nor prelate.

Banished from Arezzo for a satire on indulgences, Aretino attached himself to Pope Leo X in Rome and, after publishing scandalous sonnets in 1523, to Giovanni de' Medici in Florence. When Giovanni died, he began to feel, with good reason, that there was a price on his head, and so in 1527 he took refuge in Venice, the proud island republic which harbored many refugees and eccentrics. There he took up residence in sumptuous apartments on the Grand Canal, where he spent his days writing voluminous letters. His evenings were given over to banquets and entertainments, often distinctly licentious. Finally, turning his talent for flattery to good use, Aretino worked his



Pietro Aretino, after a portrait by Titian.

way into the graces of the famous Venetian painter Titian and the German Emperor Charles V.

How could a mere author afford his luxurious existence? The public was eager for confidential gossip and delighted to have the sensation of peeking through keyholes at their idols and rulers. With the great presses of Venice at his elbow, and with a never-failing eye for the chinks in people's armor, Aretino kept himself on the bestseller list for decades, both at home and abroad.

Publicity, however, was only part of his formula for success. Aretino had many prominent "patrons." These, either fearing the power of the press in days when convictions for libel were hard to get or needing public flattery, showered him with bribes year in and year out. It was blackmail in a manner that only the Renaissance could conceive. Aretino's epitaph reads that God alone has escaped his quips. Jacob Burckhardt, the great modern historian of the Renaissance, observed that "he could extort no money from God by threats or flattery. . . ."

While Aretino was one of the best-known figures in his own time, we rarely hear of him now. He rode to fame and fortune on the coattails of the unusual personalities that the Renaissance amply provided, and for the most part it is only in connection with them that we remember him today.

No greater contrast to Aretino can be imagined than Michelangelo. Solitary, ascetic and philosophical, his preoccupations were not passing pleasures, but the artistic ways of finding and interpreting the deepest meaning of human existence.

His painting, his sculpture and his architecture leave the impression of a profound, brooding nature possessed by the high seriousness of man's earthly state. For Michelangelo, to be human was to be caught in an epic struggle between good and evil—a struggle in which victory was attained by a godlike strength of character.

In 1541 the aging Michelangelo had completed for the pope a fresco depicting the *Last Judgment*. Conceived and executed on a vast scale, and peopled with hundreds of nude figures representing the blessed and the damned, it covered the entire end wall of the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican.

The idealized nude form had always been Michelangelo's prime vehicle of expression for his lofty conceptions. Up to this time Greek and Roman statues of nude gods and heroes had served as precedents for his own creations. But in the 1530's a new attitude, in keeping with the rising tide of the Counter-Reformation, had replaced the Renaissance respect for ancient art. Many protested that so much nudity in a holy place was improper, if not outrightly sacrilegious.

In the letter Pietro Aretino wrote to Michelangelo in 1545, Aretino echoed these sentiments. An opportunist, he wanted to keep in step with the trends of his time. Aretino was certainly not trying to improve Michelangelo's morals. Nor was he seeking publicity, for he promised not to publish his letter.

Actually, Aretino had a personal motive for writing. A connoisseur and collector, he had been trying for years to coax drawings from Michelangelo. These would have served as tangible indications of his good taste and his close association with one of the greatest men of the age. Michelangelo never sent the requested "presents," and thus he laid himself open to Aretino's animosity.

Aretino's letter is contrived to wound Michelangelo wherever he supposed the master was vulnerable. He refers to Michelangelo's failure to finish the great tomb of Pope Julius II, an undertaking that had haunted Michelangelo for years but over which he had no control, because of legal complications arising from Julius' will. Aretino also suggests an unfavorable comparison between the art of Michelangelo and that of his rival, Raphael. Insinuations are made concerning the company Michelangelo kept. Finally, the artist's unsociability is attributed to a disdain for mankind. After an absurd contrast between the "indiscretions" of the new fresco and Aretino's own modesty of style (as exemplified in his comedy about prostitution, La Nanna), the gossip moves on to make the brazen recommendation that the Last Judgment be destroyed—for the good of souls!

We are not certain whether Michelangelo ever received the letter, although we know it was sent. All that history reports by way of an answer is silence.



SIR, when I inspected the complete sketch of the whole of your Last Judgment, I arrived at recognizing the eminent graciousness of Raphael in its agreeable beauty of invention.

Meanwhile, as a baptized Christian, I blush before the license, so forbidden to man's intellect, which you have used in expressing ideas connected with the highest aims and final ends to which our faith aspires. So, then, that Michelangelo stupendous in his fame, that Michelangelo renowned for prudence, that Michelangelo whom all admire has chosen to display to the whole world an impiety of irreligion only equaled by the perfection of his painting! Is it possible that you, who, since you are divine, do not condescend to consort with human beings, have done this in the greatest temple built to God, upon the highest altar raised to Christ, in the most sacred chapel upon earth, where the mighty hinges of the Church, the venerable priests of our religion, the Vicar of Christ, with solemn ceremonies and holy prayers, confess, contemplate and adore His body, His blood and His flesh?

If it were not infamous to introduce the comparison, I would plume myself upon my virtue when I wrote La Nanna. I would demonstrate the superiority of my reserve to your indiscretion, seeing that I, while handling themes lascivious and immodest, use language comely and decorous, speak in terms beyond reproach and inoffensive to chaste ears. You, on the contrary, presenting so awful a subject, exhibit

saints and angels, these without earthly decency and those without celestial honors.

The pagans, when they modeled a Diana, gave her clothes; when they made a naked Venus, hid the parts which are not shown with the hand of modesty. And here there comes a Christian, who, because he rates art higher than the faith, deems it a royal spectacle to portray martyrs and virgins in improper attitudes, to show men dragged down by their shame, before which things houses of ill-fame would shut the eyes in order not to see them. Your art would be at home in some voluptuous ancient bath, certainly not in the highest chapel of the world. Less criminal were it if you were an infidel than, being a believer, thus to sap the faith of others. Up to the present time the splendor of such audacious marvels has not gone unpunished; for their very superexcellence is the death of your good name. Restore them to repute by turning the indecent parts of the damned to flames and those of the blessed to sunbeams; or imitate the modesty of Florence, who hides your David's shame beneath some gilded leaves. And yet that statue is exposed upon a public square, not in a consecrated chapel.

As I wish that God may pardon you, I do not write this out of any resentment for the things I begged of you. In truth, if you had sent me what you promised, you would only have been doing what you ought to have desired most eagerly to do in your own interest; for this act of courtesy would silence the envious tongues which say that only certain Gerards and Thomases dispose of them.

Well, if the treasure bequeathed you by Pope Julius, in order that you might deposit his ashes in an urn of your own carving, was not enough to make you keep your plighted word, what can I expect from you? It is not your ingratitude, your avarice, great painter, but the grace and merit of the Supreme Shepherd, which decide his fame. God wills that Julius should live renowned forever in a simple tomb, inurned in his own merits and not in some proud monument dependent on your genius. Meantime, your failure to discharge your obligations is reckoned to you as an act of theying.

Our souls need the tranquil emotions of piety more than the lively impressions of plastic art. May God, then, inspire his Holiness Paul with the same thoughts as He instilled into Gregory of blessed memory, who chose to despoil Rome of the proud statues of the pagan deities rather than to let their magnificence deprive the humbler images of the saints of the devotion of the people.

"LAST JUDGMENT"

Lastly, when you set about composing your picture of the universe and hell and heaven, if you had steeped your heart with those suggestions of glory, of honor and of terror proper to the theme which I sketched out and offered to you in the letter I wrote you and the whole world reads, I venture to assert that not only would nature and all kind influences cease to regret the illustrious talents they endowed you with, and which today render you, by virtue of your art, an image of the marvelous; but Providence, who sees all things, would herself continue to watch over such a masterpiece as long as order lasts in her government of the hemispheres.

Your servant,

THE ARETINE.

Now that I have blown off some of the rage I feel against you for the cruelty you used to my devotion, and have taught you to see that, while you may be divine, I am not made of water, I bid you tear up this letter, for I have done the like, and do not forget that I am one to whose epistles kings and emperors reply.

To the great MICHELANGELO BUONARROTI in Rome.



by Charles Lamb

A CONDENSATION



HOME COURSE APPRECIATION



HARLES LAMB, BORN IN THE INNER TEMPLE, 10th of February, 1775; educated in Christ's Hospital; afterward a clerk in the Accountants' Office, East India House; pensioned off from that service, 1825, after thirty-three years' service; is now a gentleman at large; can remember few specialties in his life worth noting, except that he once caught a swallow flying (teste sua manu)."

So begins the "Autobiography," published almost as an obituary in a London magazine four months after Lamb died. This brief self-portrait, which describes the famous essayist better than any other person might, continues:

"Below the middle stature; cast of face slightly Jewish, with no Judaic tinge in his complexional religion; stammers abominably, and is therefore more apt to discharge his occasional conversation in a quaint aphorism or a poor quibble, than in set and edifying speeches; has consequently been libeled as a person always aiming at wit; which, as he told a dull fellow that charged him with it, is at least as good as aiming at dullness.

"A small eater, but not drinker; confesses a partiality for the production of the juniper berry; was a fierce smoker of tobacco, but may be resembled to a volcano burned out, emitting only now and then a casual puff.

"Has been guilty of obtruding upon the public a tale in prose called Rosamund Gray; a dramatic sketch named John Woodvil; a "Farewell Ode to Tobacco," with sundry other poems, and light prose matter, collected in two slight crown octavos, and pompously christened his "works," though in fact they were his recreations. His true works

may be found on the shelves of Leadenhall Street, filling some hundred folios.

"He is also the true Elia, whose Essays are extant in a little volume, published a year or two since, and rather better known from that name without a meaning than from anything he has done, or can hope to do, in his own name.

"He was also the first to draw the public attention to the old English dramatists, in a work called Specimens of English Dramatic Writers who Lived about the Time of Shakespeare, published about fifteen years since. In short, all his merits and demerits to set forth would take to the end of Mr. Upcott's book, and then not be told truly.

"He died 18, much lamented.

Witness his hand,

CHARLES LAMB

18th April, 1827."

After the word "lamented," Lamb appended a note: "To anybody—please to fill up these blanks." The hand that did wrote "27 December, 1834."

It was a small enough favor to perform for a man who had lived his life with open kindness and good-humored cantankerousness, under circumstances which would have turned others to bitter resentment and despair.

LAMB'S STYLE

This brief sketch is both characteristic of and totally different from the typical Lamb. The characteristic qualities are its humorous self-effacement, its honesty, its good-natured spoofing. It differs from Lamb's usual style, however, in its directness. It takes none of the eccentric turns we associate with a piece of writing by Charles Lamb. Here he stays close to the point, lists all the pertinent facts of his life and ignores those tangents that take us only Lamb knows where. True, each statement could have led us on one of his delightful, observant wanderings, but then, as he himself notes, any expansion of his theme would have taken a whole book. And actually, many of the points he mentioned had already been the subjects of essays.

But here he omits, as he did in his essays, the black cloud (or, the event that could have become the black cloud, had he chosen to make it so) that hovered over his whole life. There is no mention of the

event that took place on September 22, 1796, in his twenty-first year, that determined the manner in which he would live the remaining thirty-eight years of his life.

"I DATE FROM THE DAY OF HORRORS"

Lamb had been uneasy that September morning as he left home for his desk in the East India House. His sister Mary, ten years older than himself, had been showing signs of approaching insanity. He must have been anxious as he made his way home that evening, for he himself had spent six weeks in an asylum the year before and undoubtedly knew better than most the tortures of the mentally ill. But even his worst fears could not have prepared him for the scene he was to behold as he entered his home. He arrived in time to grab from his sister's hand the knife with which, in a fit of insanity, she had just attacked her apprentice, wounded her father and murdered her mother. Mary was removed to an asylum; the coroner's inquest returned a verdict of lunacy.

Lamb could have allowed Mary to remain in a public asylum, as their elder brother John urged. But he would not. He became Mary's legal guardian; quietly and tenderly—never complaining but often sad, troubled and lonely—he assumed full responsibility for her and arranged his life to meet her needs.

Mary's insanity was of the type that recurs periodically. When she was well, she was a gay, well-informed, gifted woman. Then she would become increasingly irritable. When this occurred, brother and sister would collect her belongings and together they would walk to the asylum. A friend has reported meeting them thus one day, weeping, walking hand in hand, carrying her strait jacket between them.

If Lamb ever viewed Mary's plight as a disaster, he never spoke of it as such, and all his actions deny that he ever felt it so. Care for her became his life. It is believed that he renounced his love, the Alice W_____n of the essays, to devote his life to Mary; he had to change their dwelling frequently to protect Mary from embarrassment; he felt guilty when he had to take trips without her; and when she was away he felt lonely.

Lamb accepted his tasks cheerfully. His good humor rarely left him. Even after he himself had been confined for madness, he could write to his closest friend, the great English poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge: "I am got somewhat rational now and don't bite anyone." He could genially refer to himself and his sister as "shorn Lambs."

THE FOLIOS OF LEADENHALL STREET

Tears of pity have spilled over the memory of poor Charles Lamb, although he would have been the last to be grateful for them. It may be true, as it is held, that the burden of Mary not only restricted his personal life, but limited his development as a man of letters. It may have been true, also, that the burden of Mary chained him to a desk in the East India Company for thirty-three years.

Lamb could ask: "Why the devil am I never to have a chance of scribbling my own free thoughts, verse or prose again? Why must I write of tea and drugs, and price goods and the bales of indigo?" But he could also comment humorously, as he did in his "Autobiography," that his true works filled hundreds of folios to be "found on the shelves of Leadenhall Street," that is, in the East India House.

It is useless to spend time wondering what Lamb might have been or what he might have become had there been no Mary to tend and no ledgers to fill. Actually when one reads the novel, the plays, the poems he wrote early in life, one feels that he had no great talent for fiction. Of course, the early works of many artists fail to show signs of their later genius. But Lamb's talent for poetry was exceedingly slight, for novel-writing it was nonexistent and, if we are candid, as a playwright he was a bore.

If Lamb had not spent thirty-three years as a "white-collar worker," he might have had time to find his true medium, the essay, at an earlier date. He had always longed for freedom; he had thought he would be delighted when he was finally released from the bondage of commerce by a generous pension. Yet in his essay "The Superannuated Man," he echoes the troubled feelings of many who have taken advantage of retirement. Lamb seemed to need his office, where they called him Charley and where, when a superior remarked, "I notice, Mr. Lamb, that you come very late every morning," Mr. Lamb could answer, "Yes, but see how early I go."

THE BIRTH OF ELIA

THE LAMBS WERE a convivial pair. Their Wednesday evenings spent with friends in talk over the wine were famous. Lamb found time for writing the many letters to friends (often from his office desk on official stationery) which take their place among the best examples of English letter-writing. He found time for a large circle of friends, for play-going and for trips.

With Mary he collaborated on the Tales from Shakespeare, Mary condensing the comedies, he doing the tragedies. Singly, he edited Specimens of English Dramatic Poets who Lived about the Time of Shakespeare, a brilliant if highly personal compilation which revived interest in England's forgotten writers.

But it was in 1820 that Lamb began the writing with which he made his mark. In January of that year, the London Magazine was established. Lamb at first did not want to contribute, and much pleading was required before he would do so. Thus it was not until August that Elia was introduced to the readers of the magazine and to the world. The essay published was the one we now know as "The South Sea House," recollections of the few months he had spent as a clerk in that famous investment house when he was seventeen.

The essay was signed "Elia." Here is Lamb's own account of the history of the name as he told it to his publishers:

"Poor Elia, the real (for I am but a counterfeit), is dead. The fact is, a person of that name, an Italian, was a fellow clerk of mine at the South Sea House, thirty (not forty) years ago, when the characters I described there existed, but had left it like myself many years; and I having a brother now there and doubting how he might relish certain descriptions in it, I clapped down the name of Elia to it, which passed off pretty well, for Elia himself added the function of an author to that of a scrivener, like myself.

"I went the other day (not having seen him for a year) to laugh over with him at my usurpation of his name, and found him, alas! no more than a name, for he died of consumption eleven months ago, and I knew not of it.

"So the name has fairly devolved to me, I think; and 'tis all he has left me."

Lamb was forty-five years old. For this essay, written almost reluctantly, the first in a series that would establish his immortality, Lamb went back to his youth for his subject and his name. This quality of looking over and abstracting from the past and this disguise are but a few of the outstanding qualities of Charles Lamb, the writer and the man.

TRADITION OF THE ESSAY

THE WORD "ESSAY" MEANS an attempt or an exploration. The premise behind an essay is that the author, in considering certain ideas and facts about a particular subject, intends only to explore his

material. When a writer uses the word "essay" in his title, he makes it clear at the outset that he is concerned more with exploring a problem than with resolving it.

Germs of the essay may be found in the *Bible*; for example, in the *Book of Proverbs*. The moral and philosophical reflections of the Roman writers Cicero and Seneca are anticipations of our modern essay. As Francis Bacon said, "the word is late, but the thing is ancient." The name and the form of the essay were established permanently by the Frenchman Michel de Montaigne whose *Essays* appeared in 1586–88. The personal, almost gossipy quality of his work earned Montaigne the title "Father of the Modern Essay."

The prominence he gave to the personal element in his work makes him, more specifically perhaps, the father of the *informal* essay. This type of essay is characterized by an abundance of opinion and discursive reflection. Freedom of style and manner, within certain limits, is typical of the informal essay. It is not random musing, however, but purposeful thinking directed toward a specific end.

The tradition set by Montaigne in the sixteenth century was introduced to England by Sir Francis Bacon. It was followed in the late seventeenth and the early eighteenth centuries by the English essayists Joseph Addison and Richard Steele. But whereas Montaigne had concentrated on confessions about his personal life, Addison and Steele introduced broader subjects.

By frequently using the word "I," essayists are often accused of being egotists. Yet the quality of an essay draws very heavily on the quality of the personality behind the personal pronoun. It is Charles Lamb's personality that lends the charming, highly original touch to his writings.

ELIA: A POET OF THE CITY

It has been said that, with the Essays of Elia, the English essay reached its peak of perfection. We might say that the very secret of Lamb's artistry lies in the fact that he fed himself on earlier English prose writers. Yet his learning is never tedious, for he blends erudite observations with the ordinary occurrences of life.

Lamb is the prose poet of the city. He was born in London and he lived in or very near it all his life. He loved the city and what he called the "furniture of my world." "I must confess that I am not romance-bit about *Nature*," he wrote to a friend even as he was leaving for a visit to the Lake District. "Streets, streets, streets, markets, theaters,

churches, Covent Gardens, shops sparkling with pretty faces of industrious milliners, neat sempstresses . . . authors in the street with spectacles . . . lamps lit at night, pastrycooks' and silversmiths' shops . . . noise of coaches, drowsy cry of mechanic watchmen at night. . . . These are thy pleasures, O London with-the-many-sins." Or again, as he wrote to his friend William Wordsworth, one of the greatest glorifiers of Nature: ". . . London itself a pantomime and masquerade—all these things work themselves into my mind and feed me, without a power of satiating me. The wonder of these sights impels me into nightwalks about her crowded streets, and I often shed tears in the motley Strand from fullness of joy at so much life."

Lamb's essays are devoted to the matter of the city as it affected him. He talks about rural estates, but that is all in a reverie, as removed from immediate experience as are those long-dead discoverers of the tastiness of roast pig. Unlike his friends Coleridge and Wordsworth, he does not write of rivers and mountains, of daffodils or ancient mariners. Chimney sweepers, schoolboys, clerks in large business establishments, book borrowers and the theater are all part of his province.

A HUMOR GENTLE AND REFINED

THE TRAGIC EVENTS of Lamb's life seem to have imparted a melancholy to his work. Nevertheless, it abounds in warm humor. His melancholy was, as in his "Autobiography," mostly concealed. However it did affect the manner of his writing. His humor is subdued, much, as one of his friends observed, as the "music" of his own gentle laughter.

Imaginary things play a great part in Lamb's writing. To their charm is added that of quaint expressions and archaic words. Lamb's seductive quality as an essayist and his distinct originality are the products of his fanciful view of life. Lamb's artistry is fully conscious, but there is nothing conceited or self-applauding in his work.

His use of the first person is not egotistic. It is Lamb's direct means of endearing himself to the reader and involving the reader in his own life. Elia, always at the center of the essays, describes himself in the same tones he uses to describe a poor relation or a humdrum clerk, a disarming figure in his gentle self-mockery. Human beings of whatever cast are his principal interest; they sit, without knowing it, for memorable portraits. His brother John is the James Elia of "My Relations"; his sister Mary, the Bridget Elia of "Mackery End, in Hert-

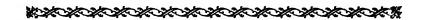
fordshire" and others; Grandmother Field, appearing as herself, in "Dream Children: A Reverie"; his good friend Coleridge, the unforgettable Blue-Coat boy in "Christ's Hospital Five and Thirty Years Ago," and again as Comberbatch in "The Two Races of Men." Lamb's deft characterizations and his reminiscences help to bring the reader more closely into the orbit of his life.

Lamb's witty, pointed remarks have been called the "minute scintillations of genius." Such a description is more apt, perhaps, in discussing the shard-like wit of a La Rochefoucauld, for Lamb's humor, as in the "Dissertation upon Roast Pig," is more diffuse and depends on the gentle building up of details to achieve its effect.

Lamb's friends (and readers) were drawn to this gentle, intelligent man who sustained himself with humor despite a strange and troubled existence. Yet, lest one lapse into mawkishness, it does well at this point to heed Lamb's warning:

Reader . . . "it is proper to have done with this solemn mockery. "The Essays want no Preface; they are all Preface. A Preface is nothing but a talk with the reader; and they do nothing else.

"Let Elia come forth bare as he was born."



THE SOUTH-SEA HOUSE

Reader, In thy passage from the bank—where thou hast been receiving thy half-yearly dividends (supposing thou art a lean annuitant like myself)—to the Flower Pot, to secure a place for Dalston, or Shacklewell, or some other thy suburban retreat northerly—didst thou never observe a melancholy-looking, handsome brick and stone edifice, to the left—where Threadneedle Street abuts upon Bishopsgate? I dare say thou hast often admired its magnificent portals ever gaping wide, and disclosing to view a grave court, with cloisters, and pillars, with few or no traces of goers-in or comers-out—a desolation something like Balclutha's.*

This was once a house of trade, a center of busy interests. The throng of merchants was here—the quick pulse of gain—and here some forms of business are still kept up, though the soul be long since fled. Here are still to be seen stately porticoes; imposing staircases; offices roomy as the state apartments in palaces—deserted, or thinly peopled with a few straggling clerks; the still more sacred interiors of court and committee rooms, with venerable faces of beadles, door-keepers—directors seated in form on solemn days (to proclaim a dead dividend), at long worm-eaten tables, that have been mahogany, with tarnished gilt-leather coverings, supporting massy silver inkstands long since dry; the oaken wainscots hung with pictures of deceased governors and sub-governors, of Queen Anne, and the two first mon-

^{*} I passed by the walls of Balclutha, and they were desolate.—Ossian. [Lamb's note]

archs of the Brunswick dynasty; huge charts, which subsequent discoveries have antiquated; dusty maps of Mexico, dim as dreams, and soundings of the Bay of Panama! The long passages hung with buckets, appended, in idle row, to walls, whose substance might defy any, short of the last, conflagration; with vast ranges of cellarage under all, where dollars and pieces-of-eight once lay, an "unsunned heap," for Mammon to have solaced his solitary heart withal, long since dissipated, or scattered into air at the blast of the breaking of that famous Bubble.

Such is the SOUTH-SEA HOUSE. At least, such it was forty years ago, when I knew it—a magnificent relic! What alterations may have been made in it since, I have had no opportunities of verifying. Time, I take for granted, has not freshened it. No wind has resuscitated the face of the sleeping waters. A thicker crust by this time stagnates upon it. The moths, that were then battening upon its obsolete ledgers and daybooks, have rested from their depredations, but other light generations have succeeded, making fine fretwork among their single and double entries. Layers of dust have accumulated (a superfetation of dirt!) upon the old layers, that seldom used to be disturbed, save by some curious finger, now and then, inquisitive to explore the mode of bookkeeping in Queen Anne's reign; or, with less hallowed curiosity, seeking to unveil some of the mysteries of that tremendous HOAX whose extent the petty peculators of our day look back upon with the same expression of incredulous admiration, and hopeless ambition of rivalry, as would become the puny face of modern conspiracy contemplating the Titan size of Vaux's superhuman plot.*

Peace to the manes of the BUBBLE! Silence and destitution are upon thy walls, proud house, for a memorial!

Situated as thou art, in the very heart of stirring and living commerce—amid the fret and fever of speculation—with the Bank, and the 'Change, and the India House about thee, in the heyday of present prosperity, with their important faces, as it were, insulting thee, their poor neighbor out of business—to the idle and merely contemplative—to such as me, old house! there is a charm in thy quiet, a cessation, a coolness from business, an indolence almost cloistral, which is delightful! With what reverence have I paced thy great bare rooms and courts at eventide! They spoke of the past: the shade of some dead accountant, with visionary pen in ear, would flit by me, stiff as in life.

^{*} Anne Vaux harbored conspirators in the Gunpowder Plot to blow up Parliament on Nov. 5, 1605.

Living accounts and accountants puzzle me. I have no skill in figuring. But thy great dead tomes, which scarce three degenerate clerks of the present day could lift from their enshrining shelves, with their old fantastic flourishes, and decorative rubric interlacings, their sums in triple columniations, set down with formal superfluity of ciphers, with pious sentences at the beginning, without which our religious ancestors never ventured to open a book of business, or bill of lading—the costly vellum covers of some of them almost persuading us that we are got into some better library—are very agreeable and edifying spectacles. I can look upon these defunct dragons with complacency. Thy heavy odd-shaped ivory-handled penknives (our ancestors had everything on a larger scale than we have hearts for) are as good as anything from Herculaneum. The pounce-boxes of our days have gone retrograde.

The very clerks which I remember in the South-Sea House—I speak of forty years back—had an air very different from those in the public offices that I have had to do with since. They partook of the genius of the place!

They were mostly (for the establishment did not admit of superfluous salaries) bachelors. Generally (for they had not much to do) persons of a curious and speculative turn of mind. Old-fashioned, for a reason mentioned before. Humorists, for they were of all descriptions; and, not having been brought together in early life (which has a tendency to assimilate the members of corporate bodies to each other) but, for the most part, placed in this house in ripe or middle age, they necessarily carried into it their separate habits and oddities, unqualified, if I may so speak, as into a common stock. Hence they formed a sort of Noah's ark. Odd fishes. A lay-monastery. Domestic retainers in a great house, kept more for show than use. Yet pleasant fellows, full of chat—and not a few among them had arrived at considerable proficiency on the German flute.

The cashier at that time was one Evans, a Cambro-Briton. He had something of the choleric complexion of his countrymen stamped on his visage, but was a worthy sensible man at bottom. He wore his hair, to the last, powdered and frizzed out, in the fashion which I remember to have seen in caricatures of what were termed, in my young days, *Maccaronies*. He was the last of that race of beaux. Melancholy as a gibcat over his counter all the forenoon, I think I see him, making up his cash (as they call it) with tremulous fingers, as if he feared everyone about him was a defaulter; in his hypochondry

ready to imagine himself one; haunted, at least, with the idea of the possibility of his becoming one; his tristful visage clearing up a little over his roast neck of veal at Anderton's at two (where his picture still hangs, taken a little before his death by desire of the master of the coffeehouse, which he had frequented for the last five-and-twenty years), but not attaining the meridian of its animation till evening brought on the hour of tea and visiting. The simultaneous sound of his well-known rap at the door with the stroke of the clock announcing six, was a topic of never-failing mirth in the families which this dear old bachelor gladdened with his presence. Then was his forte, his glorified hour! How would he chirp, and expand, over a muffin! How would he dilate into secret history! His countryman, Pennant himself, in particular, could not be more eloquent than he in relation to old and new London—the site of old theaters, churches, streets gone to decay, where Rosamond's Pond stood, the Mulberry gardens, and the Conduit in Cheap-with many a pleasant anecdote, derived from paternal tradition, of those grotesque figures which Hogarth has immortalized in his picture of *Noon*, the worthy descendants of those heroic confessors, who, flying to this country, from the wrath of Louis the Fourteenth and his dragoons, kept alive the flame of pure religion in the sheltering obscurities of Hog Lane, and the vicinity of the Seven Dials!

Deputy, under Evans, was Thomas Tame. He had the air and stoop of a nobleman. You would have taken him for one, had you met him in one of the passages leading to Westminster Hall. By stoop, I mean that gentle bending of the body forward, which, in great men, must be supposed to be the effect of a habitual condescending attention to the applications of their inferiors. While he held you in converse, you felt strained to the height in the colloquy. The conference over, you were at leisure to smile at the comparative insignificance of the pretensions which had just awed you. His intellect was of the shallowest order. It did not reach to a saw or a proverb. His mind was in its original state of white paper. A sucking babe might have posed him. What was it then? Was he rich? Alas, no! Thomas Tame was very poor. Both he and his wife looked outwardly gentlefolks, when I fear all was not well at all times within. She had a neat meager person, which it was evident she had not sinned in over-pampering; but in its veins was noble blood. She traced her descent, by some labyrinth of relationship, which I never thoroughly understood-much less can explain with any heraldic certainty at this time of day-to the illustrious but un-

Essays of Elia

fortunate house of Derwentwater. This was the secret of Thomas's stoop. This was the thought, the sentiment, the bright solitary star of your lives—ye mild and happy pair—which cheered you in the night of intellect, and in the obscurity of your station! This was to you instead of riches, instead of rank, instead of glittering attainments; and it was worth them all together. You insulted none with it; but while you wore it as a piece of defensive armor only, no insult likewise could reach you through it.

Of quite another stamp was the then accountant, John Tipp. He neither pretended to high blood, nor, in good truth, cared one fig about the matter. He "thought an accountant the greatest character in the world, and himself the greatest accountant in it." Yet John was not without his hobby. The fiddle relieved his vacant hours. He sang, certainly, with other notes than to the Orphean lyre. He did, indeed, scream and scrape most abominably. His fine suite of official rooms in Threadneedle Street, which, without anything very substantial appended to them, were enough to enlarge a man's notions of himself that lived in them (I know not who is the occupier of them now), resounded fortnightly to the notes of a concert of "sweet breasts," as our ancestors would have called them, culled from clubrooms and orchestras-chorus singers, first and second violoncellos, double basses and clarionets—who ate his cold mutton, and drank his punch, and praised his ear. He sate like Lord Midas among them. But at the desk Tipp was quite another sort of creature. Thence all ideas, that were purely ornamental, were banished. You could not speak of anything romantic without rebuke. Politics were excluded. A newspaper was thought too refined and abstracted. The whole duty of man consisted in writing off dividend warrants. The striking of the annual balance in the company's books (which, perhaps, differed from the balance of last year in the sum of £25:1:6) occupied his days and nights for a month previous. Not that Tipp was blind to the deadness of things (as they call them in the city) in his beloved house, or did not sigh for a return of the old stirring days when South-Sea hopes were young (he was indeed equal to the wielding of any of the most intricate accounts of the most flourishing company in these or those days), but to a genuine accountant the difference of proceeds is as nothing. The fractional farthing is as dear to his heart as the thousands which stand before it. He is the true actor, who, whether his part be a prince or a peasant, must act it with like intensity. With Tipp form was everything. His life was formal. His actions seemed ruled with a

ruler. His pen was not less erring than his heart. He made the best executor in the world; he was plagued with incessant executorships accordingly, which excited his spleen and soothed his vanity in equal ratios. He would swear (for Tipp swore) at the little orphans, whose rights he would guard with a tenacity like the grasp of the dying hand that commended their interests to his protection. With all this there was about him a sort of timidity—his few enemies used to give it a worse name-a something which in reverence to the dead, we will place, if you please, a little on this side of the heroic. Nature certainly had been pleased to endow John Tipp with a sufficient measure of the principle of self-preservation. There is a cowardice which we do not despise, because it has nothing base or treacherous in its elements; it betrays itself, not you: it is mere temperament, the absence of the romantic and the enterprising; it sees a lion in the way, and will not, with Fortinbras, "greatly find quarrel in a straw," when some supposed honor is at stake. Tipp never mounted the box of a stagecoach in his life; or leaned against the rails of a balcony; or walked upon the ridge of a parapet; or looked down a precipice; or let off a gun; or went upon a water party; or would willingly let you go, if he could have helped it. Neither was it recorded of him, that for lucre, or for intimidation, he ever forsook friend or principle.

Whom next shall we summon from the dusty dead, in whom common qualities become uncommon? Can I forget thee, Henry Man, the wit, the polished man of letters, the author, of the South-Sea House? who never enteredst thy office in a morning, or quittedst it in midday (what didst thou in an office?) without some quirk that left a sting! Thy gibes and thy jokes are now extinct, or survive but in two forgotten volumes, which I had the good fortune to rescue from a stall in Barbican, not three days ago, and found thee terse, fresh, epigrammatic, as alive. Thy wit is a little gone by in these fastidious days—thy topics are staled by the "newborn gauds" of the time—but great thou used to be in Public Ledgers, and in Chronicles, upon Chatham, and Shelburne, and Rockingham, and Howe, and Burgoyne, and Clinton, and the war which ended in the tearing from Great Britain her rebellious colonies, and Keppel and Wilkes and Sawbridge and Bull and Dunning and Pratt and Richmond and such small politics.

A little less facetious, and a great deal more obstreperous, was fine, rattling, rattleheaded Plumer. He was descended—not in a right line, reader (for his lineal pretensions, like his personal, favored a little of the sinister bend)—from the Plumers of Hertfordshire. So tradition

gave him out; and certain family features not a little sanctioned the opinion. Certainly old Walter Plumer (his reputed author) had been a rake in his days, and visited much in Italy, and had seen the world. He was uncle, bachelor uncle, to the fine old Whig still living, who has represented the county in so many successive Parliaments, and has a fine old mansion near Ware. Walter flourished in George the Second's days, and was the same who was summoned before the House of Commons about a business of franks, with the old Duchess of Marlborough. You may read of it in Johnson's *Life of Cave*. Cave came off cleverly in that business. It is certain our Plumer did nothing to discountenance the rumor. He rather seemed pleased whenever it was, with all gentleness, insinuated. But, besides his family pretensions, Plumer was an engaging fellow, and sang gloriously.

Not so sweetly sang Plumer as thou sangest, mild, childlike, pastoral M——; a flute's breathing less divinely whispering than thy Arcadian melodies, when, in tones worthy of Arden, thou didst chant that song sung by Amiens to the banished Duke, which proclaims the winter wind more lenient than for a man to be ungrateful. Thy sire was old surly M——, the unapproachable churchwarden of Bishopsgate. He knew not what he did, when he begat thee, like spring, gentle offspring of blustering winter—only unfortunate in thy ending, which should have been mild, conciliatory, swanlike.

Much remains to sing. Many fantastic shapes rise up, but they must be mine in private—already I have fooled the reader to the top of his bent—else could I omit that strange creature Woollett, who existed in trying the question, and bought litigations?—and still stranger, inimitable, solemn Hepworth, from whose gravity Newton might have deduced the law of gravitation. How profoundly would he nib a pen, with what deliberation would he wet a wafer!

But it is time to close—night's wheels are rattling fast over me—it is proper to have done with this solemn mockery.

Reader, what if I have been playing with thee all this while?—peradventure the very names, which I have summoned up before thee, are fantastic, insubstantial, like Henry Pimpernel, and old John Naps of Greece—be satisfied that something answering to them has had a being. Their importance is from the past.

OXFORD IN THE VACATION

Casting a preparatory glance at the bottom of this article—as the wary connoisseur in prints, with cursory eye (which, while it reads, seems as though it read not), never fails to consult the quis sculpsit in the corner, before he pronounces some rare piece to be a Vivares, or a Woollet—methinks I hear you exclaim, reader, Who is Elia?

Because in my last I tried to divert thee with some half-forgotten humors of some old clerks defunct, in an old house of business, long since gone to decay, doubtless you have already set me down in your mind as one of the selfsame college, a votary of the desk, a notched and cropped scrivener—one that sucks his sustenance, as certain sick people are said to do, through a quill.

Well, I do agnize something of the sort. I confess that it is my humor, my fancy-in the forepart of the day, when the mind of your man of letters requires some relaxation (and none better than such as at first sight seems most abhorrent from his beloved studies)—to while away some good hours of my time in the contemplation of indigos, cottons, raw silks, piece goods, flowered or otherwise. In the first place * * * * and then it sends you home with such increased appetite to your books * * * not to say, that your outside sheets, and waste wrappers of foolscap, do receive into them, most kindly and naturally, the impression of sonnets, epigrams, essays—so that the very parings of a countinghouse are, in some sort, the settings up of an author. The enfranchised quill, that has plodded all the morning among the cart-rucks of figures and ciphers, frisks and curvets so at its ease over the flowery carpet-ground of a midnight dissertation. It feels its promotion. * * * So that you see, upon the whole, the literary dignity of Elia is very little, if at all, compromised in the condescension.

Not that, in my anxious detail of the many commodities incidental to the life of a public office, I would be thought blind to certain flaws, which a cunning carper might be able to pick in this Joseph's vest. And here I must have leave, in the fullness of my soul, to regret the abolition, and doing-away-with altogether, of those consolatory interstices and sprinklings of freedom, through the four seasons—the red-

letter days, now become, to all intents and purposes, dead-letter days. There was Paul, and Stephen, and Barnabas—

Andrew and John, men famous in old times

—we were used to keep all their days holy as long back as I was at school at Christ's. I remember their effigies, by the same token, in the old Basket Prayer Book. There hung Peter in his uneasy posture—holy Bartlemy in the troublesome act of flaying, after the famous Marsyas by Spagnoletti. I honored them all, and could almost have wept the defalcation of Iscariot, so much did we love to keep holy memories sacred: only methought I a little grudged at the coalition of the better Jude with Simon, clubbing (as it were) their sanctities together to make up one poor gaudy-day between them, as an economy unworthy of the dispensation.

These were bright visitations in a scholar's and a clerk's life—"far off their coming shone." I was as good as an almanac in those days. I could have told you such a saint's day falls out next week, or the week after. Peradventure the Epiphany, by some periodical infelicity, would, once in six years, merge in a Sabbath. Now am I little better than one of the profane. Let me not be thought to arraign the wisdom of my civil superiors, who have judged the further observation of these holy tides to be papistical, superstitious. Only in a custom of such long standing, methinks, if their Holinesses the Bishops had, in decency, been first sounded—but I am wading out of my depths. I am not the man to decide the limits of civil and ecclesiastical authority. I am plain Elia—no Selden, nor Archbishop Usher—though at present in the thick of their books, here in the heart of learning, under the shadow of the mighty Bodley.

I can here play the gentleman, enact the student. To such a one as myself, who has been defrauded in his young years of the sweet food of academic institution, nowhere is so pleasant to while away a few idle weeks at, as one or other of the Universities. Their vacation, too, at this time of the year, falls in so pat with ours. Here I can take my walks unmolested, and fancy myself of what degree or standing I please. I seem admitted ad eundem. I fetch up past opportunities. I can rise at the chapel-bell and dream that it rings for me. In moods of humility I can be a Sizar, or a Servitor. When the peacock vein rises, I strut a Gentleman Commoner. In graver moments I proceed Master of Arts. Indeed I do not think I am much unlike that respectable character. I have seen your dim-eyed vergers, and bed-makers in

spectacles, drop a bow or a curtsy, as I pass, wisely mistaking me for something of the sort. I go about in black, which favors the notion. Only in Christ Church reverend quadrangle, I can be content to pass for nothing short of a Seraphic Doctor.

The walks at these times are so much one's own—the tall trees of Christ's, the groves of Magdalen! The halls deserted and with open doors inviting one to slip in unperceived, and pay a devoir to some Founder, or noble or royal Benefactress (that should have been ours), whose portrait seems to smile upon their overlooked beadsman, and to adopt me for their own. Then, to take a peep in by the way at the butteries, and sculleries, redolent of antique hospitality: the immense caves of kitchens, kitchen fireplaces, cordial recesses; ovens whose first pies were baked four centuries ago; and spits which have cooked for Chaucer! Not the meanest minister among the dishes but is hallowed to me through his imagination, and the Cook goes forth a Manciple.

Antiquity! thou wondrous charm, what art thou? that, being nothing, art everything! When thou wert, thou wert not antiquity—then thou wert nothing, but hadst a remoter antiquity, as thou calledst it, to look back to with blind veneration; thou thyself being to thyself flat, jejune, modern! What mystery lurks in this retroversion? or what half-Januses * are we, that cannot look forward with the same idolatry with which we forever revert! The mighty future is as nothing, being everything! the past is everything, being nothing!

What were thy dark ages? Surely the sun rose as brightly then as now, and man got him to his work in the morning. Why is it we can never hear mention of them without an accompanying feeling as though a palpable obscure had dimmed the face of things, and that our ancestors wandered to and fro groping!

Above all thy rarities, old Oxenford, what do most arride and solace me, are thy repositories of moldering learning, thy shelves——

What a place to be in is an old library! It seems as though all the souls of all the writers that have bequeathed their labors to these Bodleians, were reposing here, as in some dormitory, or middle state. I do not want to handle, to profane the leaves, their winding sheets. I could as soon dislodge a shade. I seem to inhale learning, walking amid their foliage; and the odor of their old moth-scented coverings is fragrant as the first bloom of those sciential apples which grew amid the happy orchard.

^{*} Januses of one face.—Sir Thomas Browne. [Lamb's note]

Still less have I curiosity to disturb the elder repose of MSS. Those variæ lectiones, so tempting to the more erudite palates, do but disturb and unsettle my faith. I am no Herculanean raker. The credit of the three witnesses might have slept unimpeached for me. I leave these curiosities to Porson, and to G. D.—whom, by the way, I found busy as a moth over some rotten archive, rummaged out of some seldom-explored press, in a nook at Oriel. With long poring he is grown almost into a book. He stood as passive as one by the side of the old shelves. I longed to new-coat him in russia,* and assign him his place. He might have mustered for a tall Scapula.

D. is assiduous in his visits to these seats of learning. No inconsiderable portion of his moderate fortune, I apprehend, is consumed in journeys between them and Clifford's Inn—where, like a dove on the asp's nest, he has long taken up his unconscious abode, amid an incongruous assembly of attorneys, attorneys' clerks, apparitors, promoters, vermin of the law, among whom he sits "in calm and sinless peace." The fangs of the law pierce him not, the winds of litigation blow over his humble chambers, the hard sheriff's officer moves his hat as he passes, legal nor illegal discourtesy touches him, none thinks of offering violence or injustice to him—you would as soon "strike an abstract idea."

D. has been engaged, he tells me, through a course of laborious years, in an investigation into all curious matter connected with the two Universities; and has lately lit upon a MS. collection of charters, relative to C——, by which he hopes to settle some disputed points—particularly that long controversy between them as to priority of foundation. The ardor with which he engages in these liberal pursuits, I am afraid, has not met with all the encouragement it deserved, either here, or at C——. Your caputs, and heads of colleges, care less than anybody else about these questions. Contented to suck the milky fountains of their Alma Maters, without inquiring into the venerable gentlewomen's years, they rather hold such curiosities to be impertinent—unreverend. They have their good glebe lands in manu, and care not much to rake into the title-deeds. I gather at least so much from other sources, for D. is not a man to complain.

D. started like an unbroke heifer when I interrupted him. A priori it was not very probable that we should have met in Oriel. But D. would have done the same, had I accosted him on the sudden in his own walks in Clifford's Inn, or in the Temple. In addition to a provok-

^{*} Leather

ing shortsightedness (the effect of late studies and watchings at the midnight oil) D. is the most absent of men. He made a call the other morning at our friend M.'s in Bedford Square; and, finding nobody at home, was ushered into the hall, where, asking for pen and ink, with great exactitude of purpose he enters me his name in the book—which ordinarily lies about in such places, to record the failures of the untimely or unfortunate visitor—and takes his leave with many ceremonies and professions of regret. Some two or three hours after, his walking destinies returned him into the same neighborhood again, and again the quiet image of the fireside circle at M.'s-Mrs. M. presiding at it like a Queen Lar, with pretty A. S. at her side-striking irresistibly on his fancy, he makes another call (forgetting that they were "certainly not to return from the country before that day week"), and disappointed a second time, inquires for pen and paper as before; again the book is brought, and in the line just above that in which he is about to print his second name (his re-script) his first name (scarce dry) looks out upon him like another Sosia, or as if a man should suddenly encounter his own duplicate! The effect may be conceived. D. made many a good resolution against any such lapses in future. I hope he will not keep them too rigorously.

For with G. D., to be absent from the body is sometimes (not to speak it profanely) to be present with the Lord. At the very time when, personally encountering thee, he passes on with no recognition—or, being stopped, starts like a thing surprised—at that moment, reader, he is on Mount Tabor, or Parnassus, or co-sphered with Plato, or, with Harrington, framing "immortal commonwealths," devising some plan of amelioration to thy country, or thy species—peradventure meditating some individual kindness or courtesy, to be done to thee thyself, the returning consciousness of which made him to start so guiltily at thy obtruded personal presence.

D. is delightful anywhere, but he is at the best in such places as these. He cares not much for Bath. He is out of his element at Buxton, at Scarborough, or Harrowgate. The Cam and the Isis are to him "better than all the waters of Damascus." On the Muses' hill he is happy, and good, as one of the Shepherds on the Delectable Mountains; and when he goes about with you to show you the halls and colleges, you think you have with you the Interpreter at the House Beautiful.

CHRIST'S HOSPITAL FIVE-AND-THIRTY YEARS AGO

IN MR. LAMB'S "WORKS," published a year or two since, I find a magnificent eulogy on my old school,* such as it was, or now appears to him to have been, between the years 1782 and 1789. It happens very oddly that my own standing at Christ's was nearly corresponding with his; and, with all gratitude to him for his enthusiasm for the cloisters, I think he has contrived to bring together whatever can be said in praise of them, dropping all the other side of the argument most ingeniously.

I remember L. at school, and can well recollect that he had some peculiar advantages, which I and others of his schoolfellows had not. His friends lived in town, and were near at hand; and he had the privilege of going to see them almost as often as he wished, through some invidious distinction, which was denied to us. The present worthy sub-treasurer to the Inner Temple can explain how that happened. He had his tea and hot rolls of a morning, while we were battening upon our quarter of a penny loaf—our crug—moistened with attenuated small beer, in wooden piggins, smacking of the pitched leathern jack it was poured from. Our Monday's milk porritch, blue and tasteless, and the pease soup of Saturday, coarse and choking, were enriched for him with a slice of "extraordinary bread and butter," from the hot loaf of the Temple. The Wednesday's mess of millet, somewhat less repugnant—we had three banyan to four meat days in the week-was endeared to his palate with a lump of double-refined, and a smack of ginger (to make it go down the more glibly) or the fragrant cinnamon. In lieu of our half-pickled Sundays, or quite fresh boiled beef on Thursdays (strong as caro equina), with detestable marigolds floating in the pail to poison the broth, our scanty mutton scrags on Friday, and rather more savory, but grudging, portions of the same flesh, rotten-roasted or rare, on the Tuesdays (the only dish which excited our appetites, and disappointed our stomachs, in almost equal proportion) he had his hot plate of roast veal, or the more tempting griskin (exotics unknown to our palates), cooked in the paternal kitchen (a great thing), and brought him daily by his maid or aunt! I remember the good old relative (in whom love forbade pride) squatting down upon some odd stone in a by-nook of the cloisters, disclosing the viands (of higher regale than those cates which the

^{*} Recollections of Christ's Hospital. [Lamb's note]

ravens ministered to the Tishbite); and the contending passions of L. at the unfolding. There was love for the bringer; shame for the thing brought, and the manner of its bringing; sympathy for those who were too many to share in it; and, at top of all, hunger (eldest, strongest of the passions!) predominant, breaking down the stony fences of shame, and awkwardness, and a troubling over-consciousness.

I was a poor friendless boy. My parents, and those who should care for me, were far away. Those few acquaintances of theirs, which they could reckon upon being kind to me in the great city, after a little forced notice, which they had the grace to take of me on my first arrival in town, soon grew tired of my holiday visits. They seemed to them to recur too often, though I thought them few enough; and, one after another, they all failed me, and I felt myself alone among six hundred playmates.

O the cruelty of separating a poor lad from his early homestead! The yearnings which I used to have toward it in those unfledged years! How, in my dreams, would my native town (far in the west) come back, with its church, and trees, and faces! How I would wake weeping, and in the anguish of my heart exclaim upon sweet Calne in Wiltshire!

To this late hour of my life, I trace impressions left by the recollections of those friendless holidays. The long warm days of summer never return but they bring with them a gloom from the haunting memory of those whole-day leaves, when, by some strange arrangement, we were turned out for the livelong day, upon our own hands, whether we had friends to go to or none. I remember those bathing excursions to the New River which L. recalls with such relish, better, I think, than he can—for he was a home-seeking lad, and did not much care for such water pastimes. How merrily we would sally forth into the fields; and strip under the first warmth of the sun; and wanton like young dace in the streams; getting us appetites for noon, which those of us that were penniless (our scanty morning crust long since exhausted) had not the means of allaying—while the cattle, and the birds, and the fishes were at feed about us and we had nothing to satisfy our cravings—the very beauty of the day, and the exercise of the pastime, and the sense of liberty, setting a keener edge upon them! How faint and languid, finally, we would return, toward nightfall, to our desired morsel, half-rejoicing, half-reluctant, that the hours of our uneasy liberty had expired!

It was worse in the days of winter, to go prowling about the streets

objectless, shivering at cold windows of print shops, to extract a little amusement; or haply, as a last resort in the hopes of a little novelty, to pay a fifty-times repeated visit (where our individual faces should be as well known to the warden as those of his own charges) to the Lions in the Tower, to whose levee, by courtesy immemorial, we had a prescriptive title to admission.

L.'s governor (so we called the patron who presented us to the foundation) lived in a manner under his paternal roof. Any complaint which he had to make was sure of being attended to. This was understood at Christ's, and was an effectual screen to him against the severity of masters, or worse tyranny of the monitors. The oppressions of these young brutes are heart-sickening to call to recollection. I have been called out of my bed, and waked for the purpose, in the coldest winter nights—and this not once, but night after night—in my shirt, to receive the discipline of a leathern thong, with eleven other sufferers, because it pleased my callow overseer, when there has been any talking heard after we were gone to bed, to make the six last beds in the dormitory, where the youngest children of us slept, answerable for an offense they neither dared to commit nor had the power to hinder. The same execrable tyranny drove the younger part of us from the fires, when our feet were perishing with snow; and, under the cruellest penalties, forbade the indulgence of a drink of water when we lay in sleepless summer nights fevered with the season and the day's sports.

There was one H——, who, I learned, in after days was seen expiating some maturer offense in the hulks. (Do I flatter myself in fancying that this might be the planter of that name, who suffered—at Nevis, I think, or St. Kitts—some few years since? My friend Tobin was the benevolent instrument of bringing him to the gallows.) This petty Nero actually branded a boy who had offended him with a redhot iron; and nearly starved forty of us with exacting contributions, to the one half of our bread, to pamper a young ass, which, incredible as it may seem, with the connivance of the nurse's daughter (a young flame of his) he had contrived to smuggle in, and keep upon the leads of the ward, as they called our dormitories. This game went on for better than a week, till the foolish beast, not able to fare well but he must cry roast meat—happier than Caligula's minion, could he have kept his own counsel—but, foolisher, alas! than any of his species in the fables, waxing fat, and kicking, in the fullness of bread, one unlucky minute would needs proclaim his good fortune to the world

below; and, laying out his simple throat, blew such a ram's-horn blast, as (toppling down the walls of his own Jericho) set concealment any longer at defiance. The client was dismissed, with certain attentions, to Smithfield; but I never understood that the patron underwent any censure on the occasion. This was in the stewardship of L.'s admired Perry.

Under the same facile administration, can L. have forgotten the cool impunity with which the nurses used to carry away openly, in open platters, for their own tables, one out of two of every hot joint, which the careful matron had been seeing scrupulously weighed out for our dinners? These things were daily practiced in that magnificent apartment which L. (grown connoisseur since, we presume) praises so highly for the grand paintings "by Verrio, and others," with which it is "hung round and adorned." But the sight of sleek, well-fed bluecoat boys in pictures was, at that time, I believe, little consolatory to him, or us, the living ones, who saw the better part of our provisions carried away before our faces by harpies; and ourselves reduced (with the Trojan in the hall of Dido)

To feed our mind with idle portraiture.

L. has recorded the repugnance of the school to gags, or the fat of fresh beef boiled; and sets it down to some superstition. But these unctuous morsels are never grateful to young palates (children are universally fat-haters), and in strong, coarse, boiled meats, unsalted, are detestable. A gag-eater in our time was equivalent to a goule, and held in equal detestation, suffered under the imputation:

. . . . 'Twas said He ate strange flesh.

He was observed, after dinner, carefully to gather up the remnants left at his table (not many nor very choice fragments, you may credit me) and, in an especial manner, these disreputable morsels, which he would convey away and secretly stow in the settle that stood at his bedside. None saw when he ate them. It was rumored that he privately devoured them in the night. He was watched, but no traces of such midnight practices were discoverable. Some reported that on leavedays he had been seen to carry out of the bounds a large blue check handkerchief, full of something. This then must be the accursed thing. Conjecture next was at work to imagine how he could dispose of it. Some said he sold it to the beggars. This belief generally prevailed.

He went about moping. None spake to him. No one would play with him. He was excommunicated, put out of the pale of the school. He was too powerful a boy to be beaten, but he underwent every mode of that negative punishment which is more grievous than many stripes. Still he persevered. At length he was observed by two of his schoolfellows, who were determined to get at the secret, and had traced him one leave-day for the purpose, to enter a large worn-out building, such as there exist specimens of in Chancery Lane, which are let out to various scales of pauperism, with open door and a common staircase. After him they silently slunk in, and followed by stealth up four flights, and saw him tap at a poor wicket, which was opened by an aged woman, meanly clad. Suspicion was now ripened into certainty. The informers had secured their victim. They had him in their toils. Accusation was formally preferred, and retribution most signal was looked for. Mr. Hathaway, the then steward (for this happened a little after my time), with that patient sagacity which tempered all his conduct, determined to investigate the matter before he proceeded to sentence. The result was that the supposed mendicants, the receivers or purchasers of the mysterious scraps, turned out to be the parents of ____, an honest couple come to decay, whom this seasonable supply had, in all probability, saved from mendicancy; and that this young stork, at the expense of his own good name, had all this while been only feeding the old birds! The governors on this occasion, much to their honor, voted a present relief to the family of ____, and presented him with a silver medal. The lesson which the steward read upon RASH JUDGMENT, on the occasion of publicly delivering the medal to —, I believe would not be lost upon his auditory. I had left school then, but I well remember ——. He was a tall, shambling youth, with a cast in his eye, not at all calculated to conciliate hostile prejudices. I have since seen him carrying a baker's basket. I think I heard he did not do quite so well by himself as he had done by the old folks.

I was a hypochondriac lad; and the sight of a boy in fetters, upon the day of my first putting on the blue clothes, was not exactly fitted to assuage the natural terrors of initiation. I was of tender years, barely turned of seven; and had only read of such things in books, or seen them but in dreams. I was told he had *run away*. This was the punishment for the first offense. As a novice I was soon after taken to see the dungeons. These were little, square, Bedlam cells, where a boy could just lie at his length upon straw and a blanket—a mattress, I

think, was afterward substituted—with a peep of light, let in askance, from a prison-orifice at top, barely enough to read by. Here the poor boy was locked in by himself all day, without sight of any but the porter who brought him his bread and water—who might not speak to him; or of the beadle, who came twice a week to call him out to receive his periodical chastisement, which was almost welcome, because it separated him for a brief interval from solitude. And here he was shut up by himself of nights out of the reach of any sound, to suffer whatever horrors the weak nerves, and superstition incident to his time of life, might subject him to.* This was the penalty for the second offense. Wouldst thou like, reader, to see what became of him in the next degree?

The culprit, who had been a third time an offender, and whose expulsion was at this time deemed irreversible, was brought forth, as at some solemn auto da fe, arrayed in uncouth and most appalling attire; all trace of his late "watchet weeds" carefully effaced, he was exposed in a jacket resembling those which London lamplighters formerly delighted in, with a cap of the same. The effect of this divestiture was such as the ingenious devisers of it could have anticipated. With his pale and frighted features, it was as if some of those disfigurements in Dante had seized upon him. In this disguisement he was brought into the hall (L.'s favorite state-room), where awaited him the whole number of his schoolfellows, whose joint lessons and sports he was thenceforth to share no more; the awful presence of the steward, to be seen for the last time; of the executioner beadle, clad in his state robe for the occasion; and of two faces more, of direr import, because never but in these extremities visible. These were governors; two of whom by choice, or charter, were always accustomed to officiate at these Ultima Supplicia; not to mitigate (so at least we understood it), but to enforce the uttermost stripe. Old Bamber Gascoigne, and Peter Aubert, I remember, were colleagues on one occasion, when the beadle turning rather pale, a glass of brandy was ordered to prepare him for the mysteries. The scourging was, after the old Roman fashion, long and stately. The lictor accompanied the criminal quite round the hall. We were generally too faint, with attending to the previous dis-

^{*} One or two instances of lunacy, or attempted suicide, accordingly, at length convinced the governors of the impolicy of this part of the sentence, and the midnight torture to the spirits was dispensed with. This fancy of dungeons for children was a sprout of Howard's brain; for which (saving the reverence due to Holy Paul) methinks I could willingly spit upon his statue. [Lamb's note]

Essays of Elia

gusting circumstances, to make accurate report with our eyes of the degree of corporal suffering inflicted. Report, of course, gave out the back knotty and livid. After scourging, he was made over, in his San Benito, to his friends, if he had any (but commonly such poor runagates were friendless), or to his parish officer, who, to enhance the effect of the scene, had his station allotted to him on the outside of the hall gate.

These solemn pageantries were not played off so often as to spoil the general mirth of the community. We had plenty of exercise and recreation after school hours; and, for myself, I must confess, that I was never happier than in them. The Upper and the Lower Grammar Schools were held in the same room; and an imaginary line only divided their bounds. Their character was as different as that of the inhabitants on the two sides of the Pyrenees. The Rev. James Boyer was the Upper Master; but the Rev. Matthew Field presided over that portion of the apartment of which I had the good fortune to be a member. We lived a life as careless as birds. We talked and did just what we pleased, and nobody molested us. We carried an accidence, or a grammar, for form; but, for any trouble it gave us, we might take two years in getting through the verbs deponent, and another two in forgetting all that we had learned about them. There was now and then the formality of saying a lesson, but if you had not learned it, a brush across the shoulders (just enough to disturb a fly) was the sole remonstrance. Field never used the rod; and in truth he wielded the cane with no great good will-holding it "like a dancer." It looked in his hands rather like an emblem than an instrument of authority; and an emblem, too, he was ashamed of. He was a good, easy man, that did not care to ruffle his own peace, nor perhaps set any great consideration upon the value of juvenile time. He came among us, now and then, but often stayed away whole days from us; and when he came it made no difference to us-he had his private room to retire to, the short time he stayed, to be out of the sound of our noise. Our mirth and uproar went on. We had classics of our own, without being beholden to "insolent Greece or haughty Rome," that passed current among us-Peter Wilkins, the Adventures of the Hon. Captain Robert Boyle, the Fortunate Bluecoat Boy, and the like. Or we cultivated a turn for mechanic and scientific operations; making little sundials of paper; or weaving those ingenious parentheses called cat-cradles; or making dry peas to dance upon the end of a tin pipe; or studying the art military over that laudable game "French and English," and a hundred other such devices to pass away the time—mixing the useful with the agreeable—as would have made the souls of Rousseau and John Locke chuckle to have seen us.

Matthew Field belonged to that class of modest divines who affect to mix in equal proportion the gentleman, the scholar, and the Christian; but, I know not how, the first ingredient is generally found to be the predominating dose in the composition. He was engaged in gay parties, or with his courtly bow at some episcopal levee, when he should have been attending upon us. He had for many years the classical charge of a hundred children, during the four or five first years of their education, and his very highest form seldom proceeded further than two or three of the introductory fables of Phaedrus. How things were suffered to go on thus, I cannot guess. Boyer, who was the proper person to have remedied these abuses, always affected, perhaps felt, a delicacy in interfering in a province not strictly his own. I have not been without my suspicions, that he was not altogether displeased at the contrast we presented to his end of the school. We were a sort of Helots to his young Spartans. He would sometimes, with ironic deference, send to borrow a rod of the Under Master, and then, with Sardonic grin, observe to one of his upper boys, "how neat and fresh the twigs looked." While his pale students were battering their brains over Xenophon and Plato, with a silence as deep as that enjoyed by the Samite, we were enjoying ourselves at our ease in our little Goshen. We saw a little into the secrets of his discipline, and the prospect did but the more reconcile us to our lot. His thunders rolled innocuous for us; his storms came near, but never touched us; contrary to Gideon's miracle, while all around were drenched, our fleece was dry. His boys turned out the better scholars; we, I suspect, have the advantage in temper. His pupils cannot speak of him without something of terror allaying their gratitude; the remembrance of Field comes back with all the soothing images of indolence, and summer slumbers, and work like play, and innocent idleness, and Elysian exemptions, and life itself a "playing holiday."

Though sufficiently removed from the jurisdiction of Boyer, we

Though sufficiently removed from the jurisdiction of Boyer, we were near enough (as I have said) to understand a little of his system. We occasionally heard sounds of the *Ululantes*, and caught glances of Tartarus. B. was a rabid pedant. His English style was cramped to barbarism. His Easter anthems (for his duty obliged him to those

periodical flights) were grating as scrannel pipes.* He would laugh, ay, and heartily, but then it must be at Flaccus's quibble about Rex, or at the tristis serveritas in vultu, or inspicere in patinas, of Terence thin jests, which at their first broaching could hardly have had vis enough to move a Roman muscle. He had two wigs, both pedantic, but of different omen. The one serene, smiling, fresh powdered, betokening a mild day. The other, an old, discolored, unkempt, angry caxon, denoting frequent and bloody execution. Woe to the school, when he made his morning appearance in his passy, or passionate wig. No comet expounded surer. J. B. had a heavy hand. I have known him double his knotty fist at a poor trembling child (the maternal milk hardly dry upon its lips) with a "Sirrah, do you presume to set your wits at me?" Nothing was more common than to see him make a headlong entry into the schoolroom, from his inner recess, or library, and with turbulent eye singling out a lad, roar out, "Od's my life, sirrah" (his favorite adjuration), "I have a great mind to whip you"; then, with as sudden a retracting impulse, fling back into his lair—and, after a cooling lapse of some minutes (during which all but the culprit had totally forgotten the context) drive headlong out again, piecing out his imperfect sense, as if it had been some Devil's Litany, with the expletory yell—"and I WILL, too." In his gentler moods, when the rabidus furor was assuaged, he had resort to an ingenious method, peculiar, for what I have heard, to himself, of whipping the boy, and reading the Debates, at the same time; a paragraph, and a lash between; which in those times, when parliamentary oratory was most at a height and flourishing in these realms, was not calculated to impress the patient with a veneration for the diffuser graces of rhetoric.

Once, and but once, the uplifted rod was known to fall ineffectual from his hand—when droll squinting W—— having been caught putting the inside of the master's desk to a use for which the architect had clearly not designed it, to justify himself, with great simplicity averred, that he did not know that the thing had been forewarned. This exquisite irrecognition of any law antecedent to the oral or * In this and everything B. was the antipodes of his coadjutor. While the former was digging his brains for crude anthems, worth a pig-nut, F. would be recreating his gentlemanly fancy in the more flowery walks of the Muses. A little dramatic effusion of his, under the name of Vertumnus and Pomona, is not yet forgotten by the chroniclers of that sort of literature. It was accepted by Garrick, but the town did not give it their sanction. B. used to say of it, in a way of half-compliment, half-irony, that it was too classical for representation. [Lamb's note.]

declaratory, struck so irresistibly upon the fancy of all who heard it (the pedagogue himself not excepted) that remission was unavoidable.

L. has given credit to B.'s great merits as an instructor. Coleridge, in his literary life, has pronounced a more intelligible and ample encomium on them. The author of the *Country Spectator* doubts not to compare him with the ablest teachers of antiquity. Perhaps we cannot dismiss him better than with the pious ejaculation of C. when he heard that his old master was on his deathbed: "Poor J. B.!—may all his faults be forgiven; and may he be wafted to bliss by little cherub boys all head and wings, with no bottoms to reproach his sublunary infirmities."

Under him were many good and sound scholars bred. First Grecian of my time was Lancelot Pepys Stevens, kindest of boys and men, since Co-grammar-master (and inseparable companion) with Dr. T—e. What an edifying spectacle did this brace of friends present to those who remembered the anti-socialities of their predecessors! You never met the one by chance in the street without a wonder, which was quickly dissipated by the almost immediate sub-appearance of the other. Generally arm-in-arm, these kindly coadjutors lightened for each other the toilsome duties of their profession, and when, in advanced age, one found it convenient to retire, the other was not long in discovering that it suited him to lay down the fasces also. Oh, it is pleasant, as it is rare, to find the same arm linked in yours at forty, which at thirteen helped it to turn over the Cicero De Amicitiâ, or some tale of Antique Friendship, which the young heart even then was burning to anticipate! Co-Grecian with S. was Th-, who has since executed with ability various diplomatic functions at the Northern courts. Th-was a tall, dark, saturnine youth, sparing of speech, with raven locks. Thomas Fanshaw Middleton followed him (now Bishop of Calcutta), a scholar and a gentleman in his teens. He has the reputation of an excellent critic; and is author (besides the Country Spectator) of a Treatise on the Greek Article, against Sharpe. M. is said to bear his miter high in India, where the regni novitas (I dare say) sufficiently justifies the bearing. A humility quite as primitive as that of Jewel or Hooker might not be exactly fitted to impress the minds of those Anglo-Asiatic diocesans with a reverence for home institutions, and the church which those fathers watered. The manners of M. at school, though firm, were mild and unassuming. Next to M. (if not senior to him) was Richards, author of the Aboriginal Britons, the most spirited of the Oxford Prize Poems; a pale, studious Grecian.

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Then followed poor S——, ill-fated M——! of these the Muse is silent.

Finding some of Edward's race Unhappy, pass their annals by.

Come back into memory, like as thou wert in the dayspring of thy fancies, with hope like a fiery column before thee, the dark pillar not yet turned, Samuel Taylor Coleridge—Logician, Metaphysician, Bard! How have I seen the casual passer through the Cloisters stand still, entranced with admiration (while he weighed the disproportion between the speech and the garb of the young Mirandula), to hear thee unfold, in thy deep and sweet intonations, the mysteries of Jamblichus, or Plotinus (for even in those years thou waxedst not pale at such philosophic draughts), or reciting Homer in his Greek, or Pindar, while the walls of the old Grey Friars re-echoed to the accents of the inspired charity-boy! Many were the "wit-combats" (to dally awhile with the words of old Fuller) between him and C. V. Le G----, "which two I behold like a Spanish great galleon, and an English manof-war; Master Coleridge, like the former, was built far higher in learning, solid, but slow in his performances. C. V. L., with the English man-of-war, lesser in bulk, but lighter in sailing, could turn with all tides, tack about, and take advantage of all winds, by the quickness of his wit and invention."

Nor shalt thou, their compeer, be quickly forgotten, Allen, with the cordial smile and still more cordial laugh with which thou wert wont to make the old Cloisters shake, in thy cognition of some poignant jest of theirs; or the anticipation of some more material, and, peradventure practical one, of thine own. Extinct are those smiles, with that beautiful countenance, with which (for thou wert the *Nireus formosus* of the school), in the days of thy maturer waggery, thou didst disarm the wrath of infuriated town-damsel, who, incensed by provoking pinch, turning tigress-like round, suddenly converted by thy angel-look, exchanged the half-formed terrible "bl-----," for a gentler greeting—"bless thy handsome face!"

Next follow two, who ought to be now alive, and the friends of Elia—the junior Le G——and F——; who impelled, the former by a roving temper, the latter by too quick a sense of neglect—ill capable of enduring the slights poor Sizars are sometimes subject to in our seats of learning—exchanged their Alma Mater for the camp; perishing, one by climate, and one on the plains of Salamanca: Le G——,

sanguine, volatile, sweet-natured; F——, dogged, faithful, anticipative of insult, warm-hearted, with something of the old Roman height about him.

Fine, frank-hearted Fr——, the present master of Hertford, with Marmaduke T——, mildest of Missionaries—and both my good friends still—close the catalogue of Grecians in my time.

THE TWO RACES OF MEN

The HUMAN species, according to the best theory I can form of it, is composed of two distinct races, the men who borrow, and the men who lend. To these two original diversities may be reduced all those impertinent classifications of Gothic and Celtic tribes, white men, black men, red men. All the dwellers upon earth, "Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites," flock hither and do naturally fall in with one or other of these primary distinctions. The infinite superiority of the former, which I choose to designate as the great race, is discernible in their figure, port and a certain instinctive sovereignty. The latter are born degraded. "He shall serve his brethren." There is something in the air of one of this cast, lean and suspicious, contrasting with the open, trusting, generous manners of the other.

Observe who have been the greatest borrowers of all ages—Alcibiades, Falstaff, Sir Richard Steele, our late incomparable Brinsley—what a family likeness in all four!

What a careless, even deportment hath your borrower! what rosy gills! what a beautiful reliance on Providence doth he manifest, taking no more thought than lilies! What contempt for money, accounting it (yours and mine especially) no better than dross! What a liberal confounding of those pedantic distinctions of meum and tuum! or rather, what a noble simplification of language (beyond Tooke), resolving these supposed opposites into one clear, intelligible pronoun adjective! What near approaches doth he make to the primitive community, to the extent of one half of the principle at least.

He is the true taxer who "calleth all the world up to be taxed"; and the distance is as vast between him and one of us, as subsisted between the Augustan Majesty and the poorest obolary Jew that paid it tribute-pittance at Jerusalem! His exactions, too, have such a cheerful, voluntary air! So far removed from your sour parochial or stategatherers—those inkhorn varlets, who carry their want of welcome in

their faces! He cometh to you with a smile, and troubleth you with no receipt, confining himself to no set season. Every day is his Candlemas, or his Feast of Holy Michael. He applieth the lene tormentum of a pleasant look to your purse—which to that gentle warmth expands her silken leaves, as naturally as the cloak of the traveler for which sun and wind contended! He is the true Propontic which never ebbeth! The sea which taketh handsomely at each man's hand. In vain the victim, whom he delighteth to honor, struggles with destiny; he is in the net. Lend therefore cheerfully, O man ordained to lend—that thou lose not in the end, with thy worldly penny, the reversion promised. Combine not preposterously in thine own person the penalties of Lazarus and of Dives! But, when thou seest the proper authority coming, meet it smilingly, as it were halfway. Come, a handsome sacrifice! See how light he makes of it! Strain not courtesies with a noble enemy.

Reflections like the foregoing were forced upon my mind by the death of my old friend, Ralph Bigod, Esq., who parted this life on Wednesday evening; dying, as he had lived, without much trouble. He boasted himself a descendant from mighty ancestors of that name, who heretofore held ducal dignities in this realm. In his actions and sentiments he belied not the stock to which he pretended. Early in life he found himself invested with ample revenues; which, with that noble disinterestedness which I have noticed as inherent in men of the great race, he took almost immediate measures entirely to dissipate and bring to nothing: for there is something revolting in the idea of a king holding a private purse; and the thoughts of Bigod were all regal. Thus furnished by the very act of disfurnishment, getting rid of the cumbersome luggage of riches, more apt (as one sings)

To slacken virtue, and abate her edge, Than prompt her to do aught may merit praise,

he set forth, like some Alexander, upon his great enterprise, "borrowing and to borrow!"

In his periegesis, or triumphant progress throughout this island, it has been calculated that he laid a tithe part of the inhabitants under contribution. I reject this estimate as greatly exaggerated, but having had the honor of accompanying my friend divers times, in his perambulations about this vast city, I own I was greatly struck at first with the prodigious number of faces we met who claimed a sort of respectful acquaintance with us. He was one day so obliging as to explain the phenomenon. It seems, these were his tributaries; feeders of his ex-

chequer; gentlemen, his good friends (as he was pleased to express himself), to whom he had occasionally been beholden for a loan. Their multitudes did no way disconcert him. He rather took a pride in numbering them; and, with Comus, seemed pleased to be "stocked with so fair a herd."

With such sources, it was a wonder how he contrived to keep his treasury always empty. He did it by force of an aphorism, which he had often in his mouth, that "money kept longer than three days stinks." So he made use of it while it was fresh. A good part he drank away (for he was an excellent tosspot); some he gave away, the rest he threw away, literally tossing and hurling it violently from him—as boys do burrs, or as if it had been infectious—into ponds, or ditches, or deep holes, inscrutable cavities of the earth; or he would bury it (where he would never seek it again) by a river's side under some bank, which (he would facetiously observe) paid no interest—but out away from him it must go peremptorily, as Hagar's offspring into the wilderness, while it was sweet. He never missed it. The streams were perennial which fed his fisc. When new supplies became necessary, the first person that had the felicity to fall in with him, friend or stranger, was sure to contribute to the deficiency. For Bigod had an undeniable way with him. He had a cheerful, open exterior, a quick jovial eye, a bald forehead, just touched with grey (cana fides). He anticipated no excuse, and found none. And, waiving for a while my theory as to the great race, I would put it to the most untheorizing reader, who may at times have disposable coin in his pockets, whether it is not more repugnant to the kindliness of his nature to refuse such a one as I am describing, than to say no to a poor petitionary rogue (your bastard borrower), who, by his mumping visnomy,* tells you, that he expects nothing better; and, therefore, whose preconceived notions and expectations you do in reality so much less shock in the refusal.

When I think of this man; his fiery glow of heart; his swell of feeling; how magnificent, how *ideal* he was; how great at the midnight hour; and when I compare with him the companions with whom I have associated since, I grudge the saving of a few idle ducats, and think that I am fallen into the society of *lenders*, and *little* men.

To one like Elia, whose treasures are rather cased in leather covers than closed in iron coffers, there is a class of alienators more formidable than that which I have touched upon; I mean your borrowers of books—those mutilators of collections, spoilers of the symmetry of

^{*} A corruption of physiognomy

Essays of Elia

shelves, and creators of odd volumes. There is Comberbatch,* matchless in his depredations!

That foul gap in the bottom shelf facing you, like a great eyetooth knocked out—you are now with me in my little back study in Bloomsbury, reader!—with the huge Switzer-like tomes on each side (like the Guildhall giants, in their reformed posture, guardant of nothing), once held the tallest of my folios, Opera Bonaventuræ, choice and massy divinity, to which its two supporters (school divinity also, but of a lesser caliber—Bellarmine, and Holy Thomas), showed but as dwarfs—itself an Ascapart!—that Comberbatch abstracted upon the faith of a theory he holds, which is more easy, I confess, for me to suffer by than to refute, namely, that "the title to property in a book (my Bonaventure, for instance), is in exact ratio to the claimant's powers of understanding and appreciating the same." Should he go on acting upon this theory, which of our shelves is safe?

The slight vacuum in the left-hand case, two shelves from the ceiling—scarcely distinguishable but by the quick eye of a loser—was whilom the commodious resting place of Browne on *Urn Burial*. C. will hardly allege that he knows more about that treatise than I do, who introduced it to him, and was indeed the first (of the moderns) to discover its beauties, but so have I known a foolish lover to praise his mistress in the presence of a rival more qualified to carry her off than himself. Just below, Dodsley's dramas want their fourth volume, where Vittoria Corombona is! The remainder nine are as distasteful as Priam's refuse sons when the Fates borrowed Hector. Here stood the Anatomy of Melancholy, in sober state. There loitered the Compleat Angler, quiet as in life, by some stream side. In yonder nook, John Buncle, a widower-volume, with "eyes closed," mourns his ravished mate.

One justice I must do my friend, that if he sometimes, like the sea, sweeps away a treasure, at another time, sea-like, he throws up as rich an equivalent to match it. I have a small under-collection of this nature (my friend's gatherings in his various calls), picked up, he has forgotten at what odd places, and deposited with as little memory at mine. I take in these orphans, the twice-deserted. These proselytes of the gate are welcome as the true Hebrews. There they stand in conjunction: natives, and naturalized. The latter seem as little disposed to inquire out their true lineage as I am. I charge no warehouse-room

^{*} Samuel Taylor Coleridge assumed the name Silas Tomkyn Comberbacke when he enlisted in the army.

for these deodands, nor shall ever put myself to the ungentlemanly trouble of advertising a sale of them to pay expenses.

To lose a volume to C. carries some sense and meaning in it. You are sure that he will make one hearty meal on your viands, if he can give no account of the platter after it. But what moved thee, wayward, spiteful K., to be so importunate to carry off with thee, in spite of tears and adjurations to thee to forbear, the Letters of that princely woman, the thrice noble Margaret Newcastle—knowing at the time, and knowing that I knew also, thou most assuredly wouldst never turn over one leaf of the illustrious folio—what but the mere spirit of contradiction, and childish love of getting the better of thy friend? Then, worst cut of all! to transport it with thee to the Gallican land—

Unworthy land to harbor such a sweetness, A virtue in which all ennobling thoughts dwelt, Pure thoughts, kind thoughts, high thoughts, her sex's wonder!

—hadst thou not thy playbooks, and books of jests and fancies, about thee, to keep thee merry, even as thou keepest all companies with thy quips and mirthful tales? Child of the Green-room, it was unkindly done of thee. Thy wife, too, that part-French, better-part Englishwoman! that *she* could fix upon no other treatise to bear away, in kindly token of remembering us, than the works of Fulke Greville, Lord Brook—of which no Frenchman, nor woman of France, Italy, or England, was ever by nature constituted to comprehend a tittle! Was there not Zimmerman on Solitude?

Reader, if haply thou art blessed with a moderate collection, be shy of showing it; or if thy heart overfloweth to lend them, lend thy books; but let it be to such a one as S. T. C.—he will return them (generally anticipating the time appointed) with usury, enriched with annotations tripling their value. I have had experience. Many are these precious MSS. of his—(in matter oftentimes, and almost in quantity not unfrequently, vying with the originals) in no very clerky hand—legible in my Daniel; in old Burton; in Sir Thomas Browne; and those abstruser cogitations of the Greville, now, alas! wandering in Pagan lands. I counsel thee, shut not thy heart, nor thy library, against S. T. C.

MRS. BATTLE'S OPINIONS ON WHIST

A CLEAR FIRE, A CLEAN HEARTH and the rigor of the game." This was the celebrated wish of old Sarah Battle (now with God), who, next to her devotions, loved a good game of whist. She was none of your lukewarm gamesters, your half-and-half players, who have no objection to take a hand, if you want one to make up a rubber; who affirm that they have no pleasure in winning; that they like to win one game and lose another; that they can while away an hour very agreeably at a card table, but are indifferent whether they play or no; and will desire an adversary, who has slipped a wrong card, to take it up and play another. These insufferable triflers are the curse of a table. One of these flies will spoil a whole pot. Of such it may be said that they do not play at cards, but only play at playing at them.

Sarah Battle was none of that breed. She detested them, as I do, from her heart and soul, and would not, save upon a striking emergency, willingly seat herself at the same table with them. She loved a thorough-paced partner, a determined enemy. She took, and gave, no concessions. She hated favors. She never made a revoke, nor ever passed it over in her adversary without exacting the utmost forfeiture. She fought a good fight: cut and thrust. She held not her good sword (her cards) "like a dancer." She sat bolt upright; and neither showed you her cards, nor desired to see yours. All people have their blind side, their superstitions; and I have heard her declare, under the rose, that hearts was her favorite suit.

I never in my life—and I knew Sarah Battle many of the best years of it—saw her take out her snuffbox when it was her turn to play; or snuff a candle in the middle of a game; or ring for a servant, till it was fairly over. She never introduced, or connived at, miscellaneous conversation during its process. As she emphatically observed, cards were cards; and if I ever saw unmingled distaste in her fine last-century countenance, it was at the airs of a young gentleman of a literary turn, who had been with difficulty persuaded to take a hand; and who, in his excess of candor, declared, that he thought there was no harm in unbending the mind now and then, after serious studies, in recreations of that kind! She could not bear to have her noble occupation, to which she wound up her faculties, considered in that light. It was her business, her duty, the thing she came into the world to do, and she did it. She unbent her mind afterward over a book.

Pope was her favorite author: his Rape of the Lock her favorite work. She once did me the favor to play over with me (with the cards) his celebrated game of Ombre in that poem; and to explain to me how far it agreed with, and in what points it would be found to differ from, tradrille. Her illustrations were apposite and poignant; and I had the pleasure of sending the substance of them to Mr. Bowles; but I suppose they came too late to be inserted among his ingenious notes upon that author.

Quadrille, she has often told me, was her first love, but whist had engaged her maturer esteem. The former, she said, was showy and specious, and likely to allure young persons. The uncertainty and quick shifting of partners—a thing which the constancy of whist abhors; the dazzling supremacy and regal investiture of Spadille-absurd, as she justly observed, in the pure aristocracy of whist, where his crown and garter gave him no proper power above his brothernobility of the Aces; the giddy vanity, so taking to the inexperienced, of playing alone; above all, the overpowering attractions of a Sans Prendre Vole, to the triumph of which there is certainly nothing parallel or approaching, in the contingencies of whist—all these, she would say, make quadrille a game of captivation to the young and enthusiastic. But whist was the solider game: that was her word. It was a long meal; not, like quadrille, a feast of snatches. One or two rubbers might coextend in duration with an evening. They gave time to form rooted friendships, to cultivate steady enmities. She despised the chance-started, capricious, and ever-fluctuating alliances of the other. The skirmishes of quadrille, she would say, reminded her of the petty ephemeral embroilments of the little Italian states, depicted by Machiavel, perpetually changing postures and connections; bitter foes today, sugared darlings tomorrow; kissing and scratching in a breath;—but the wars of whist were comparable to the long, steady, deep-rooted, rational antipathies of the great French and English nations.

A grave simplicity was what she chiefly admired in her favorite game. There was nothing silly in it, like the nob in cribbage—nothing superfluous. No flushes—that most irrational of all pleas that a reasonable being can set up: that anyone should claim four by virtue of holding cards of the same mark and color, without reference to the playing of the game, or the individual worth or pretensions of the cards themselves! She held this to be a solecism; as pitiful an ambition at cards as alliteration is in authorship. She despised superficiality, and

looked deeper than the colors of things. Suits were soldiers, she would say, and must have a uniformity of array to distinguish them: but what should we say to a foolish squire, who should claim a merit from dressing up his tenantry in red jackets, that never were to be marshaled, never to take the field? She even wished that whist were more simple than it is; and, in my mind, would have stripped it of some appendages, which, in the state of human frailty, may be venially, and even commendably, allowed of. She saw no reason for the deciding of the trump by the turn of the card. Why not one suit always trumps? Why two colors, when the mark of the suits would have sufficiently distinguished them without it?

"But the eye, my dear Madam, is agreeably refreshed with the variety. Man is not the creature of pure reason—he must have his senses delightfully appealed to. We see it in Roman Catholic countries, where the music and the paintings draw in many to worship, whom your Quaker spirit of unsensualizing would have kept out. You yourself have a pretty collection of paintings, but confess to me, whether, walking in your gallery at Sandham, among those clear Vandykes, or among the Paul Potters in the anteroom, you ever felt your bosom glow with an elegant delight, at all comparable to that you have it in your power to experience most evenings over a well-arranged assortment of the court-cards?—the pretty antic habits, like heralds in a procession, the gay triumph-assuring scarlets, the contrasting deadly killing sables, the 'hoary majesty of spades,' Pam in all his glory!

"All these might be dispensed with; and with their naked names upon the drab pasteboard, the game might go on very well pictureless. But the beauty of cards would be extinguished forever. Stripped of all that is imaginative in them, they must degenerate into mere gambling. Imagine a dull deal board, or drumhead, to spread them on, instead of that nice verdant carpet (next to nature's), fittest arena for those courtly combatants to play their gallant jousts and tourneys in! Exchange those delicately turned ivory markers—work of Chinese artist, unconscious of their symbol, or as profanely slighting their true application as the arrantest Sphesian journeyman that turned out those little shrines for the goddess)—exchange them for little bits of leather (our ancestors' money) or chalk and a slate!"

The old lady, with a smile, confessed the soundness of my logic; and to her approbation of my arguments on her favorite topic that evening, I have always fancied myself indebted for the legacy of a

curious cribbage board, made of the finest Sienna marble, which her maternal uncle (old Walter Plumer, whom I have elsewhere celebrated) brought with him from Florence—this, and a trifle of five hundred pounds, came to me at her death.

The former bequest (which I do not least value) I have kept with religious care; though she herself, to confess a truth, was never greatly taken with cribbage. It was an essentially vulgar game, I have heard her say—disputing with her uncle, who was very partial to it. She could never heartily bring her mouth to pronounce "Go"—or "That's a go." She called it an ungrammatical game. The pegging teased her. I once knew her to forfeit a rubber (a five-dollar stake) because she would not take advantage of the turn-up knave, which would have given it her, but which she must have claimed by the disgraceful tenure of declaring "two for his heels." There is something extremely genteel in this sort of self-denial. Sarah Battle was a gentlewoman born.

Piquet she held the best game at the cards for two persons, though she would ridicule the pedantry of the terms, such as pique, repique, the capot—they savored (she thought) of affectation. But games for two, or even three, she never greatly cared for. She loved the quadrate, or square. She would argue thus: Cards are warfare: the ends are gain with glory. But cards are war, in disguise of a sport: when single adversaries encounter, the ends proposed are too palpable. By themselves it is too close a fight; with spectators it is not much bettered. No looker-on can be interested, except for a bet, and then it is a mere affair of money; he cares not for your luck sympathetically, or for your play. Three are still worse; a mere naked war of every man against every man, as in cribbage, without league or alliance; or a rotation of petty and contradictory interests, a succession of heartless leagues, and not much more hearty infractions of them, as in tradrille. But in square games (she meant whist), all that is possible to be attained in cardplaying is accomplished. There are the incentives of profit with honor, common to every species, though the latter can be but very imperfectly enjoyed in those other games; where the spectator is only feebly a participator. But the parties in whist are spectators and principals too. They are a theater to themselves, and a looker-on is not wanted. He is rather worse than nothing, and an impertinence. Whist abhors neutrality, or interests beyond its sphere. You glory in some surprising stroke of skill or fortune, not because a cold—or even an interested bystander witnesses it, but because your partner sympathizes in the contingency. You win for two. You triumph for two. Two are exalted.

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Two again are mortified; which divides their disgrace, as the conjunction doubles (by taking off the invidiousness) your glories. Two losing to two are better reconciled, than one to one in that close butchery. The hostile feeling is weakened by multiplying the channels. War becomes a civil game. By such reasonings as these the old lady was accustomed to defend her favorite pastime.

No inducement could ever prevail upon her to play at any game, where chance entered into the composition, for nothing. Chance, she would argue—and here again, admire the subtlety of her conclusion chance is nothing, but where something else depends upon it. It is obvious that cannot be glory. What rational cause of exultation could it give to a man to turn up size ace a hundred times together by himself? or before spectators, where no stake was depending. Make a lottery of a hundred thousand tickets with but one fortunate number and what possible principle of our nature, except stupid wonderment, could it gratify to gain that number as many times successively, without a prize? Therefore she disliked the mixture of chance in backgammon, where it was not played for money. She called it foolish, and those people idiots, who were taken with a lucky hit under such circumstances. Games of pure skill were as little to her fancy. Played for a stake, they were a mere system of overreaching. Played for glory, they were a mere setting of one man's wit—his memory, or combination-faculty rather-against another's, like a mock-engagement at a review, bloodless and profitless. She could not conceive a game wanting the spritely infusion of chance, the handsome excuses of good fortune. Two people playing at chess in a corner of a room, while whist was stirring in the center, would inspire her with insufferable horror and ennui. Those well-cut similitudes of Castles, and Knights, the imagery of the board, she would argue (and I think in this case justly), were entirely misplaced and senseless. Those hard head-contests can in no instance ally with the fancy. They reject form and color. A pencil and dry slate (she used to say) were the proper arena for such combatants.

To those puny objectors against cards, as nurturing the bad passions, she would retort, that man is a gaming animal. He must be always trying to get the better in something or other: that this passion can scarcely be more safely expended than upon a game at cards: that cards are a temporary illusion; in truth, a mere drama; for we do but play at being mightily concerned, where a few idle shillings are at stake, yet, during the illusion, we are as mightily concerned as those

whose stake is crowns and kingdoms. They are a sort of dream-fighting; much ado; great battling, and little bloodshed; mighty means for disproportioned ends; quite as diverting, and a great deal more innoxious, than many of those more serious *games* of life, which men play, without esteeming them to be such.

With great deference to the old lady's judgment in these matters, I think I have experienced some moments in my life, when playing at cards for nothing has even been agreeable. When I am in sickness, or not in the best spirits, I sometimes call for the cards, and play a game at piquet for love with my cousin Bridget—Bridget Elia.*

I grant there is something sneaking in it; but with a toothache, or a sprained ankle—when you are subdued and humble—you are glad to put up with an inferior spring of action.

There is such a thing in nature, I am convinced, as sick whist.

I grant it is not the highest style of man—I deprecate the manes of Sarah Battle—she lives not, alas! to whom I should apologize.

At such times, those *terms* which my old friend objected to, come in as something admissible. I love to get a tierce or a quatorze, though they mean nothing. I am subdued to an inferior interest. Those shadows of winning amuse me.

That last game I had with my sweet cousin (I capotted her)—dare I tell thee, how foolish I am?—I wished it might have lasted forever, though we gained nothing, and lost nothing, though it was a mere shade of play: I would be content to go on in that idle folly forever. The pipkin should be ever boiling, that was to prepare the gentle lenitive to my foot, which Bridget was doomed to apply after the game was over; and, as I do not much relish appliances, there it should ever bubble. Bridget and I should be ever playing.

A CHAPTER ON EARS

I Mistake me not, reader—nor imagine that I am by nature destitute of those exterior twin appendages, hanging ornaments, and (architecturally speaking) handsome volutes to the human capital. Better my mother had never borne me. I am, I think, rather delicately than copiously provided with those conduits; and I feel no disposition to envy the mule for his plenty, or the mole for her exactness, in those

^{*} Lamb's sister Mary

ingenious labyrinthine inlets, those indispensable side-intelligencers.

Neither have I incurred, or done anything to incur, with Defoe, that hideous disfigurement, which constrained him to draw upon assurance—to feel "quite unabashed," and at ease upon that article. I was never, I thank my stars, in the pillory; nor, if I read them aright, is it within the compass of my destiny, that I ever should be.

When therefore I say that I have no ear, you will understand me to mean—for music. To say that this heart never melted at the concord of sweet sounds, would be a foul self-libel. "Water parted from the sea" never fails to move it strangely. So does "In infancy." But they were used to be sung at her harpsichord (the old-fashioned instrument in vogue in those days) by a gentlewoman, the gentlest, sure, that ever merited the appellation, the sweetest—why should I hesitate to name Mrs. S——, once the blooming Fanny Weatheral of the Temple—who had power to thrill the soul of Elia, small imp as he was, even in his long coats; and to make him glow, tremble, and blush with a passion, that not faintly indicated the dayspring of that absorbing sentiment which was afterward destined to overwhelm and subdue his nature quite for Alice W—n.

I even think that sentimentally I am disposed to harmony. But organically I am incapable of a tune. I have been practicing "God save the King" all my life; whistling and humming of it over to myself in solitary corners; and am not yet arrived, they tell me, with:n many quavers of it. Yet hath the loyalty of Elia never been impeached.

I am not without suspicion, that I have an undeveloped faculty of music within me. For thrumming, in my wild way, on my friend A.'s piano, the other morning, while he was engaged in an adjoining parlor, on his return he was pleased to say, "he thought it could not be the maid!" On his first surprise at hearing the keys touched in somewhat an airy and masterful way, not dreaming of me, his suspicions had lighted on Jenny. But a grace, snatched from a superior refinement, soon convinced him that some being—technically perhaps deficient, but higher informed from a principle common to all the fine arts—had swayed the keys to a mood which Jenny, with all her (less cultivated) enthusiasm, could never have elicited from them. I mention this as a proof of my friend's penetration, and not with any view of disparaging Jenny.

Scientifically I could never be made to understand (yet have I taken some pains) what a note in music is; or how one note should differ from another. Much less in voices can I distinguish a soprano from a tenor. Only sometimes the thoroughbass I contrive to guess at, from its being supereminently harsh and disagreeable. I tremble, however, for my misapplication of the simplest terms of that which I disclaim. While I profess my ignorance, I scarce know what to say I am ignorant of. I hate, perhaps, by misnomers. Sostenuto and adagio stand in the like relation of obscurity to me; and Sol, Fa, Mi, Re, is as conjuring as Baralipton.

It is hard to stand alone in an age like this, (constituted to the quick and critical perception of all harmonious combinations, I verily believe, beyond all preceding ages, since Jubal stumbled upon the gamut), to remain, as it were, singly unimpressible to the magic influences of an art, which is said to have such an especial stroke at soothing, elevating, and refining the passions. Yet, rather than break the candid current of my confessions, I must avow to you, that I have received a great deal more pain than pleasure from this so cried-up faculty.

I am constitutionally susceptible of noises. A carpenter's hammer, in a warm summer noon, will fret me into more than midsummer madness. But those unconnected, unset sounds are nothing to the measured malice of music. The ear is passive to those single strokes; willingly enduring stripes while it hath no task to con. To music it cannot be passive. It will strive—mine at least will—spite of its inaptitude, to thread the maze; like an unskilled eye painfully poring upon hieroglyphics. I have sat through an Italian Opera, till, for sheer pain, and inexplicable anguish, I have rushed out into the noisiest places of the crowded streets, to solace myself with sounds, which I was not obliged to follow, and get rid of the distracting torment of endless, fruitless, barren attention! I take refuge in the unpretending assemblage of honest common-life sounds; and the purgatory of the Enraged Musician becomes my paradise.

I have sat at an Oratorio (that profanation of the purposes of the cheerful playhouse) watching the faces of the auditory in the pit (what a contrast to Hogarth's Laughing Audience!) immovable, or affecting some faint emotion—till (as some have said that our occupations in the next world will be but a shadow of what delighted us in this) I have imagined myself in some cold Theater in Hades, where some of the forms of the earthly one should be kept up, with none of the enjoyment; or like that

Party in a parlor All silent, and all DAMNED.

Above all, those insufferable concertos, and pieces of music, as they are called, do plague and embitter my apprehension. Words are something; but to be exposed to an endless battery of mere sounds; to be long a dying; to lie stretched upon a rack of roses; to keep up languor by unintermitted effort; to pile honey upon sugar, and sugar upon honey, to an interminable tedious sweetness; to fill up sound with feeling, and strain ideas to keep pace with it; to gaze on empty frames, and be forced to make the pictures for yourself; to read a book, all stops, and be obliged to supply the verbal matter; to invent extempore tragedies to answer to the vague gestures of an inexplicable rambling mime—these are faint shadows of what I have undergone from a series of the ablest-executed pieces of this empty instrumental music.

I deny not, that in the opening of a concert, I have experienced something vastly lulling and agreeable; afterward followeth the languor and the oppression. Like that disappointing book in Patmos; or, like the comings on of melancholy, described by Burton, doth music make her first insinuating approaches: "Most pleasant it is to such as are melancholy given to walk alone in some solitary grove, betwixt wood and water, by some brook side, and to meditate upon some delight-some and pleasant subject, which shall affect him most, amabilis insania, and mentis gratissimus error. A most incomparable delight to build castles in the air, to go smiling to themselves, acting an infinite variety of parts, which they suppose, and strongly imagine, they act. or that they see done. So delightsome these toys at first, they could spend whole days and nights without sleep, even whole years, in such contemplations, and fantastical meditations, which are like so many dreams, and will hardly be drawn from them-winding and unwinding themselves as so many clocks, and still pleasing their humors, until at the last the SCENE TURNS UPON A SUDDEN, and they being now habitated to such meditations and solitary places, can endure no company, can think of nothing but harsh and distasteful subjects. Fear, sorrow, suspicion, subrusticus pudor, discontent, cares, and weariness of life, surprise them on a sudden and they can think of nothing else; continually suspecting, no sooner are their eyes open, but this infernal plague of melancholy seizeth on them, and terrifies their souls, representing some dismal object to their minds; which now, by no means, no labor, no persuasions, they can avoid, they cannot be rid of, they cannot resist."

Something like this "SCENE TURNING" I have experienced at the evening parties, at the house of my good Catholic friend Nov—, who,

by the aid of a capital organ, himself the most finished of players, converts his drawing room into a chapel, his weekdays into Sundays, and these latter into minor heavens.*

When my friend commences upon one of those solemn anthems, which peradventure struck upon my heedless ear, rambling in the side aisles of the dim Abbey, some five-and-thirty years since, waking a new sense, and putting a soul of old religion into my young apprehension—(whether it be that, in which the Psalmist, weary of the persecutions of bad men, wisheth to himself dove's wings—or that other, which, with a like measure of sobriety and pathos, inquireth by what means the young man shall best cleanse his mind)—a holy calm pervadeth me.—I am for the time

-rapt above earth,
And possess joys not promised at my birth.

But when this master of the spell, not content to have laid a soul prostrate, goes on, in his power, to inflict more bliss than lies in her capacity to receive—impatient to overcome her "earthly" with his "heavenly"-still pouring in, for protracted hours, fresh waves and fresh from the sea of sound, or from that inexhausted German ocean, above which, in triumphant progress, dolphin-seated, ride those Arions Haydn and Mozart, with their attendant Tritons, Bach, Beethoven, and a countless tribe, whom to attempt to reckon up would but plunge me again in the deeps-I stagger under the weight of harmony, reeling to and fro at my wits' end; clouds, as of frankincense, oppress me, priests, altars, censers, dazzle before me, the genius of his religion hath me in her toils; a shadowy triple tiara invests the brow of my friend, late so naked, so ingenuous—he is Pope—and by him sits, like as in the anomaly of dreams, a she-Pope too, tri-coroneted like himself! I am converted, and yet a Protestant; at once malleus hereticorum, and myself grand heresiarch: or three heresies center in my person: I am Marcion, Ebion, and Cerinthus-Gog and Magog-what not?till the coming in of the friendly supper tray dissipates the figment, and a draught of true Lutheran beer (in which chiefly my friend shows himself no bigot) at once reconciles me to the rationalities of a purer faith; and restores to me the genuine unterrifying aspects of my pleasant-countenanced host and hostess.

^{*} I have been there, and still would go;
'Tis like a little heaven below.—Dr. WATTS. [Lamb's note]

A QUAKERS' MEETING

Still-born Silence! thou that art
Flood-gate of the deeper heart!
Offspring of a heavenly kind!
Frost o' the mouth, and thaw o' the mind!
Secrecy's confidant, and he
Who makes religion mystery!
Admiration's speaking'st tongue!
Leave, thy desert shades among,
Reverend hermits' hallow'd cells,
Where retired devotion dwells!
With thy enthusiasms come,
Seize our tongues, and strike us dumb!*

READER, WOULDST THOU KNOW what true peace and quiet mean; wouldst thou find a refuge from the noises and clamors of the multitude; wouldst thou enjoy at once solitude and society; wouldst thou possess the depth of thine own spirit in stillness, without being shut out from the consolatory faces of thy species; wouldst thou be alone and yet accompanied; solitary, yet not desolate; singular, yet not without some to keep thee in countenance; a unit in aggregate; a simple in composite: come with me into a Quakers' Meeting.

Dost thou love silence deep as that "before the winds were made," go not out into the wilderness, descend not into the profundities of the earth; shut not up thy casements; nor pour wax into the little cells of thy ears, with little-faith'd self-mistrusting Ulysses. Retire with me into a Quakers' Meeting.

For a man to refrain even from good words, and to hold his peace, it is commendable; but for a multitude it is great mastery.

What is the stillness of the desert compared with this place, what the uncommunicating muteness of fishes? Here the goddess reigns and revels. "Boreas, and Cesias, and Argestes loud," do not with their interconfounding uproars more augment the brawl—nor the waves of the blown Baltic with their clubbed sounds—than their opposite (Silence her sacred self) is multiplied and rendered more intense by numbers, and by sympathy. She too hath her deeps, that call unto deeps. Negation itself hath a positive more and less; and closed eyes would seem to obscure the great obscurity of midnight.

There are wounds which an imperfect solitude cannot heal. By imperfect I mean that which a man enjoyeth by himself. The perfect is

^{*} From Poems of all Sorts, by Richard Fleckno, 1653. [Lamb's note]

that which he can sometimes attain in crowds, but nowhere so absolutely as in a Quakers' Meeting. Those first hermits did certainly understand this principle, when they retired into Egyptian solitudes, not singly, but in shoals, to enjoy one another's want of conversation. The Carthusian is bound to his brethren by this agreeing spirit of incommunicativeness. In secular occasions, what so pleasant as to be reading a book through a long winter evening, with a friend sitting by —say, a wife—he, or she, too (if that be probable), reading another, without interruption, or oral communication? Can there be no sympathy without the gabble of words? Away with this inhuman, shy, single, shade-and-cavern-haunting solitariness. Give me, Master Zimmermann, a sympathetic solitude.

To pace alone in the cloisters or side aisles of some cathedral, timestricken;

> Or under hanging mountains, Or by the fall of fountains;

is but a vulgar luxury compared with that which those enjoy who come together for the purposes of more complete, abstracted solitude. This is the loneliness "to be felt." The Abbey Church of Westminster hath nothing so solemn, so spirit-soothing, as the naked walls and benches of a Quakers' Meeting. Here are no tombs, no inscriptions.

——Sands, ignoble things,
Dropt from the ruined sides of kings—

but here is something which throws Antiquity herself into the fore-ground—SILENCE, eldest of things, language of old Night, primitive discourser, to which the insolent decays of moldering grandeur have but arrived by a violent, and, as we may say, unnatural progression.

How reverend is the view of these hushed heads, Looking tranquillity!

Nothing-plotting, nought-caballing, unmischievous synod! convocation without intrigue! parliament without debate! what a lesson dost thou read to council, and to consistory! If my pen treat of you lightly—as haply it wil! wander—yet my spirit hath gravely felt the wisdom of your custom, when sitting among you in deepest peace, which some outwelling tears would rather confirm than disturb, I have reverted to the times of your beginnings, and the sowings of the seed by Fox and Dewesbury. I have witnessed that which brought before my eyes your heroic tranquillity, inflexible to the rude jests and serious violence of

the insolent soldiery, republican or royalist, sent to molest you—for ye sate betwixt the fires of two persecutions, the outcast and offscouring of church and presbytery. I have seen the reeling sea-ruffian, who had wandered into your receptacle with the avowed intention of disturbing your quiet, from the very spirit of the place receive in a moment a new heart, and presently sit among ye as a lamb amidst lambs. And I remember Penn before his accusers, and Fox in the baildock, where he was lifted up in spirit, as he tells us, and "the Judge and the Jury became as dead men under his feet."

Reader, if you are not acquainted with it, I would recommend to you, above all church-narratives, to read Sewel's History of the Quakers. It is in folio, and is the abstract of the journals of Fox and the primitive Friends. It is far more edifying and affecting than anything you will read of Wesley and his colleagues. Here is nothing to stagger you, nothing to make you mistrust, no suspicion of alloy, no drop or dreg of the worldly or ambitious spirit. You will here read the true story of that much-injured, ridiculed man (who perhaps hath been a byword in your mouth)-James Naylor: what dreadful sufferings, with what patience, he endured, even to the boring through of his tongue with red-hot irons, without a murmur; and with what strength of mind, when the delusion he had fallen into, which they stigmatized for blasphemy, had given way to clearer thoughts, he could renounce his error, in a strain of the beautifullest humility, yet keep his first grounds, and be a Quaker still! So different from the practice of your common converts from enthusiasm, who, when they apostatize, apostatize all, and think they can never get far enough from the society of their former errors, even to the renunciation of some saving truths, with which they had been mingled, not implicated.

Get the writings of John Woolman by heart; and love the early Quakers.

How far the followers of these good men in our days have kept to the primitive spirit, or in what proportion they have substituted formality for it, the Judge of Spirits can alone determine. I have seen faces in their assemblies upon which the dove sate visibly brooding. Others, again, I have watched, when my thoughts should have been better engaged, in which I could possibly detect nothing but a blank inanity. But quiet was in all, and the disposition to unanimity, and the absence of the fierce controversial workings. If the spiritual pretensions of the Quakers have abated, at least they make few pretenses. Hypocrites they certainly are not, in their preaching. It is seldom, in-

deed, that you shall see one get up amongst them to hold forth. Only now and then a trembling, female, generally ancient, voice is heard—you cannot guess from what part of the meeting it proceeds—with a low, buzzing, musical sound, laying out a few words which "she thought might suit the condition of some present," with a quaking diffidence, which leaves no possibility of supposing that anything of female vanity was mixed up, where the tones were so full of tenderness, and a restraining modesty. The men, for what I have observed, speak seldomer.

Once only, and it was some years ago, I witnessed a sample of the old Foxian excitement. It was a man of giant stature, who, as Wordsworth phrases it, might have danced "from head to foot equipt in iron mail." His frame was of iron, too. But he was malleable. I saw him shake all over with the spirit—I dare not say of delusion. The strivings of the outer man were unutterable—he seemed not to speak, but to be spoken from. I saw the strong man bowed down, and his knees to fail his joints all seemed loosening—it was a figure to set off against Paul preaching—the words he uttered were few, and sound; he was evidently resisting his will-keeping down his own word-wisdom with more mighty effort than the world's orators strain for theirs. "He had been a WIT in his youth," he told us, with expressions of a sober remorse. And it was not till long after the impression had begun to wear away that I was enabled, with something like a smile, to recall the striking incongruity of the confession—understanding the term in its worldly acceptation—with the frame and physiognomy of the person before me. His brow would have scared away the Levities—the Jocos Risusque—faster than the Loves fled the face of Dis at Enna. By wit, even in his youth, I will be sworn he understood something far within the limits of an allowable liberty.

More frequently the Meeting is broken up without a word having been spoken. But the mind has been fed. You go away with a sermon not made with hands. You have been in the milder caverns of Trophonius; or as in some den, where that fiercest and savagest of all wild creatures, the Tongue, that unruly member, has strangely lain tied up and captive. You have bathed with stillness. O, when the spirit is sore fretted, even tired to sickness of the janglings and nonsense noises of the world, what a balm and a solace it is to go and seat yourself for a quiet half hour upon some undisputed corner of a bench, among the gentle Quakers!

Their garb and stillness conjoined, present a uniformity, tranquil and herd-like, as in the pasture, "forty feeding like one."

The very garments of a Quaker seem incapable of receiving a soil;

The very garments of a Quaker seem incapable of receiving a soil; and cleanliness in them to be something more than the absence of its contrary. Every Quakeress is a lily; and when they come up in bands to their Whitsun-conferences, whitening the easterly streets of the metropolis, from all parts of the United Kingdom, they show like troops of the Shining Ones.

MY RELATIONS

AM ARRIVED AT THAT POINT of life at which a man may account it a blessing, as it is a singularity, if he have either of his parents surviving. I have not that felicity, and sometimes think feelingly of a passage in Browne's *Christian Morals*, where he speaks of a man that hath lived sixty or seventy years in the world. "In such a compass of time," he says, "a man may have a close apprehension what it is to be forgotten, when he hath lived to find none who could remember his father, or scarcely the friends of his youth, and may sensibly see with what a face in no long time Oblivion will look upon himself."

I had an aunt, a dear and good one. She was one whom single blessedness had soured to the world. She often used to say, that I was the only thing in it which she loved; and, when she thought I was quitting it, she grieved over me with mother's tears. A partiality quite so exclusive my reason cannot altogether approve. She was from morning till night poring over good books and devotional exercises. Her favorite volumes were Thomas à Kempis, in Stanhope's translation; and a Roman Catholic Prayer Book, with the matins and complines regularly set down-terms which I was at that time too young to understand. She persisted in reading them, although admonished daily concerning their Papistical tendency; and went to church every Sabbath as a good Protestant should do. These were the only books she studied; though, I think at one period of her life, she told me, she had read with great satisfaction the Adventures of an Unfortunate Young Nobleman. Finding the door of the chapel in Essex Street open one day—it was in the infancy of that heresy—she went in, liked the sermon, and the manner of worship, and frequented it at intervals for some time after. She came not for doctrinal points, and never missed them. With some little asperities in her constitution, which I have above hinted at, she was a steadfast, friendly being, and a fine old Christian. She was a woman of strong sense, and a shrewd mind—extraordinary at a repartee; one of the few occasions of her breaking silence—else she did not much value wit. The only secular employment I remember to have seen her engaged in was the splitting of French beans, and dropping them into a china basin of fair water. The odor of those tender vegetables to this day comes back upon my sense, redolent of soothing recollections. Certainly it is the most delicate of culinary operations.

Male aunts, as somebody calls them, I had none—to remember. By the uncle's side I may be said to have been born an orphan. Brother, or sister, I never had any—to know them. A sister, I think, that should have been Elizabeth, died in both our infancies. What a comfort, or what a care, may I not have missed in her! But I have cousins sprinkled about in Hertfordshire, beside two, with whom I have been all my life in habits of the closest intimacy, and whom I may term cousins par excellence. These are James and Bridget Elia.* They are older than myself by twelve and ten years; and neither of them seems disposed, in matters of advice and guidance, to waive any of the prerogatives which primogeniture confers. May they continue still in the same mind; and when they shall be seventy-five, and seventy-three, years old (I cannot spare them sooner), persist in treating me in my grand climacteric precisely as a stripling, or younger brother!

James is an inexplicable cousin. Nature hath her unities, which not every critic can penetrate; or, if we feel, we cannot explain them. The pen of Yorick, and of none since his, could have drawn J. E. entire—those fine Shandean lights and shades, which make up his story. I must limp after in my poor antithetical manner, as the fates have given me grace and talent. J. E. then—to the eye of a common observer at least—seemeth made up of contradictory principles. The genuine child of impulse, the frigid philosopher of prudence—the phlegm of my cousin's doctrine is invariably at war with his temperament, which is high sanguine. With always some fire-new project in his brain, J. E. is the systematic opponent of innovation, and crier-down of everything that has not stood the test of age and experiment. With a hundred fine notions chasing one another hourly in his fancy, he is startled at the least approach to the romantic in others; and, determined by his own sense in everything, commends you to the guidance of common

^{*} Lamb's brother John, and his sister Mary

sense on all occasions. With a touch of the eccentric in all which he does or says he is only anxious that you should not commit yourself by doing anything absurd or singular. On my once letting slip at table that I was not fond of a certain popular dish, he begged me at any rate not to say so—for the world would think me mad. He disguises a passionate fondness for works of high art (whereof he hath amassed a choice collection) under the pretext of buying only to sell again—that his enthusiasm may give no encouragement to yours. Yet, if it were so, why does that piece of tender, pastoral Domenichino hang still by his wall?—is the ball of his sight much more dear to him?—or what picture-dealer can talk like him?

Whereas mankind in general are observed to warp their speculative conclusions to the bent of their individual humors, his theories are sure to be in diametrical opposition to his conclusions. He is courageous as Charles of Sweden, upon instinct; chary of his person upon principle, as a traveling Quaker. He has been preaching up to me, all my life, the doctrine of bowing to the great—the necessity of forms, and manner, to a man's getting on in the world. He himself never aims at either, that I can discover, and has a spirit that would stand upright in the presence of the Cham of Tartary. It is pleasant to hear him discourse of patience-extolling it as the truest wisdom-and to see him during the last seven minutes that his dinner is getting ready. Nature never ran up in her haste a more restless piece of workmanship than when she molded this impetuous cousin, and Art never turned out a more elaborate orator than he can display himself to be, upon his favorite topic of the advantages of quiet and contentedness in the state, whatever it be, that we are placed in. He is triumphant on this theme, when he has you safe in one of those short stages that ply for the western road, in a very obstructing manner, at the foot of John Murray's Street-where you get in when it is empty, and are expected to wait till the vehicle hath completed her just freight-a trying threequarters of an hour to some people. He wonders at your fidgetiness-"where could we be better than we are, thus sitting, thus consulting?" -"prefers, for his part, a state of rest to locomotion"—with an eye all the while upon the coachman-till at length, waxing out of all patience, at your want of it, he breaks out into a pathetic remonstrance at the fellow for detaining us so long over the time which he had professed, and declares peremptorily, that "the gentleman in the coach is determined to get out, if he does not drive on that instant."

Very quick at inventing an argument, or detecting a sophistry, he is

incapable of attending you in any chain of arguing. Indeed, he makes wild work with logic; and seems to jump at most admirable conclusions by some process, not at all akin to it. Consonantly enough to this, he hath been heard to deny, upon certain occasions, that there exists such a faculty at all in man as reason; and wondereth how man came first to have a conceit of it—enforcing his negation with all the might of reasoning he is master of. He has some speculative notions against laughter, and will maintain that laughing is not natural to him, when peradventure the next moment his lungs shall crow like Chanticleer. He says some of the best things in the world—and declareth that wit is his aversion. It was he who said, upon seeing the Eton boys at play in their grounds—What a pity to think, that these fine ingenuous lads in a few years will all be changed into frivolous Members of Parliament!

His youth was fiery, glowing, tempestuous, and in age he discovereth no symptom of cooling. This is that which I admire in him. I hate people who meet Time halfway. I am for no compromise with that inevitable spoiler. While he lives, J. E. will take his swing. It does me good, as I walk toward the street of my daily avocation, on some fine May morning, to meet him marching in a quite opposite direction, with a jolly handsome presence, and shining sanguinc face, that indicate some purchase in his eye—a Claude, or a Hobbema—for much of his enviable leisure is consumed at Christie's and Phillips', or where not, to pick up pictures, and such gauds. On these occasions he mostly stoppeth me, to read a short lecture on the advantage a person like me possesses above himself, in having his time occupied with business which he must do, assureth me that he often feels it hang heavy on his hands, wishes he had fewer holidays, and goes off-Westward Ho!chanting a tune, to Pall Mall-perfectly convinced that he has convinced me—while I proceed in my opposite direction tuneless.

It is pleasant, again, to see this Professor of Indifference doing the honors of his new purchase, when he has fairly housed it. You must view it in every light, till he has found the best—placing it at this distance, and at that, but always suiting the focus of your sight to his own. You must spy at it through your fingers, to catch the aerial perspective, though you assure him that to you the landscape shows much more agreeable without that artifice. Woe be to the luckless wight who does not only not respond to his rapture, but who should drop an unseasonable intimation of preferring one of his anterior bargains to the present! The last is always his best hit—his "Cynthia of the minute." Alas! how

many a mild Madonna have I known to come in—a Raphael!—keep its ascendancy for a few brief moons, then, after certain intermedial degradations, from the front drawing room to the back gallery, thence to the dark parlor, adopted in turn by each of the Carracci, under successive lowering ascriptions of filiation, mildly breaking its fall, consigned to the oblivious lumber room, go out at last a Lucca Giordano, or plain Carlo Maratti! Which things when I beheld, musing upon the chances and mutabilities of fate below, hath made me to reflect upon the altered condition of great personages, or that woeful Queen of Richard the Second—

----set forth in pomp,
She came adorned hither like sweet May.
Sent back like Hallowmass or shortest day.

With great love for you, J. E. hath but a limited sympathy with what you feel or do. He lives in a world of his own, and makes slender guesses at what passes in your mind. He never pierces the marrow of your habits. He will tell an old-established playgoer, that Mr. Such-aone, of So-and-so (naming one of the Theaters), is a very lively comedian—as a piece of news! He advertised me but the other day of some pleasant green lanes which he had found out for me, knowing me to be a great walker, in my own immediate vicinity—who have haunted the identical spot any time these twenty years! He has not much respect for that class of feelings which goes by the name of sentimental. He applies the definition of real evil to bodily sufferings exclusively and rejecteth all others as imaginary. He is affected by the sight, or the bare supposition, of a creature in pain, to a degree which I have never witnessed out of womankind. A constitutional acuteness to this class of sufferings may in part account for this. The animal tribe in particular he taketh under his especial protection. A broken-winded or spur-galled horse is sure to find an advocate in him. An overloaded ass is his client forever. He is the apostle to the brute kind—the neverfailing friend of those who have none to care for them. The contemplation of a lobster boiled, or eels skinned alive, will wring him so, that "all for pity he could die." It will take the savor from his palate, and the rest from his pillow, for days and nights. With the intense feeling of Thomas Clarkson, he wanted only the steadiness of pursuit, and unity of purpose, of that "true yoke-fellow with Time," to have effected as much for the Animal as he hath done for the Negro Creation. But my uncontrollable cousin is but imperfectly formed for purposes which

Do I mention these seeming inconsistencies to smile at, or upbraid, my unique cousin? Marry, heaven, and all good manners, and the understanding that should be between kinsfolk, forbid! With all the strangenesses of this strangest of the Elias, I would not have him in one jot or tittle other than he is; neither would I barter or exchange my wild kinsman for the most exact, regular, and every way consistent kinsman breathing.

In my next, reader, I may perhaps give you some account of my cousin Bridget—if you are not already surfeited with cousins—and take you by the hand, if you are willing to go with us, on an excursion which we made a summer or two since, in search of *more cousins*—

Through the green plains of pleasant Hertfordshire.

MACKERY END, IN HERTFORDSHIRE

Bridget elia has been my housekeeper for many a long year. I have obligations to Bridget, extending beyond the period of memory. We house together, old bachelor and maid, in a sort of double singleness; with such tolerable comfort, upon the whole, that I, for one, find in myself no sort of disposition to go out upon the mountains, with the rash king's offspring, to bewail my celibacy. We agree pretty well in our tastes and habits—yet so, as "with a difference." We are generally in harmony, with occasional bickerings—as it should be among near relations. Our sympathies are rather understood than expressed; and once, upon my dissembling a tone in my voice more kind than ordinary, my cousin burst into tears, and complained that I was altered. We are both great readers in different directions. While I am hanging over (for the thousandth time) some passage in old Burton, or one of his strange contemporaries, she is

abstracted in some modern tale or adventure, whereof our common reading table is daily fed with assiduously fresh supplies. Narrative teases me. I have little concern in the progress of events. She must have a story—well, ill, or indifferently told—so there be life stirring in it, and plenty of good or evil accidents. The fluctuations of fortune in fiction—and almost in real life—have ceased to interest, or operate but dully upon me. Out-of-the-way humors and opinions, heads with some diverting twist in them, the oddities of authorship, please me most. My cousin has a native disrelish of anything that sounds odd or bizarre. Nothing goes down with her that is quaint, irregular, or out of the road of common sympathy. She "holds Nature more clever." I can pardon her blindness to the beautiful obliquities of the Religio Medici; but she must apologize to me for certain disrespectful insinuations, which she has been pleased to throw out latterly, touching the intellectuals of a dear favorite of mine, of the last century but one the thrice noble, chaste, and virtuous, but again somewhat fantastical and original-brained, generous Margaret Newcastle.

It has been the lot of my cousin, oftener perhaps than I could have wished, to have had for her associates and mine, freethinkers—leaders, and disciples, of novel philosophies and systems; but she neither wrangles with, nor accepts, their opinions. That which was good and venerable to her, when a child, retains its authority over her mind still. She never juggles or plays tricks with her understanding.

We are both of us inclined to be a little too positive; and I have observed the result of our disputes to be almost uniformly this, that in matters of fact, dates, and circumstances; it turns out, that I was in the right, and my cousin in the wrong. But where we have differed upon moral points; upon something proper to be done, or let alone; whatever heat of opposition, or steadiness of conviction, I set out with, I am sure always, in the long run, to be brought over to her way of thinking.

I must touch upon the foibles of my kinswoman with a gentle hand, for Bridget does not like to be told of her faults. She hath an awkward trick (to say no worse of it) of reading in company, at which times she will answer yes or no to a question without fully understanding its purport—which is provoking, and derogatory in the highest degree to the dignity of the putter of the said question. Her presence of mind is equal to the most pressing trials of life, but will sometimes desert her upon trifling occasions. When the purpose requires it, and is a thing of moment, she can speak to it greatly; but in matters which are

not stuff of the conscience, she hath been known sometimes to let slip a word less seasonably.

Her education in youth was not much attended to; and she happily missed all that train of female garniture which passeth by the name of accomplishments. She was tumbled early, by accident or design, into a spacious closet of good old English reading, without much selection or prohibition, and browsed at will upon that fair and wholesome pasturage. Had I twenty girls, they should be brought up exactly in this fashion. I know not whether their chance in wedlock might not be diminished by it; but I can answer for it, that it makes (if the worst come to the worst) most incomparable old maids.

In a season of distress, she is the truest comforter; but in the teasing accidents and minor perplexities which do not call out the *will* to meet them, she sometimes maketh matters worse by an excess of participation. If she does not always divide your trouble, upon the pleasanter occasions of life she is sure always to treble your satisfaction. She is excellent to be at a play with, or upon a visit; but best, when she goes a journey with you.

We made an excursion together a few summers since, into Hertfordshire, to beat up the quarters of some of our less-known relations in that fine corn country.

The oldest thing I remember is Mackery End; or Mackarel End, as it is spelled, perhaps more properly, in some old maps of Hertfordshire; a farmhouse, delightfully situated within a gentle walk from Wheathampstead. I can just remember having been there, on a visit to a great-aunt, when I was a child, under the care of Bridget; who, as I have said, is older than myself by some ten years. I wish that I could throw into a heap the remainder of our joint existences; that we might share them in equal division. But that is impossible. The house was at that time in the occupation of a substantial yeoman, who had married my grandmother's sister. His name was Gladman. My grandmother was Bruton, married to a Field. The Gladmans and the Brutons are still flourishing in that part of the county, but the Fields are almost extinct. More than forty years had elapsed since the visit I speak of; and for the greater portion of that period, we had lost sight of the other two branches also. Who or what sort of persons inherited Mackery End-kindred or strange folk-we were afraid almost to conjecture, but determined some day to explore.

By somewhat a circuitous route, taking the noble park at Luton in our way from St. Albans, we arrived at the spot of our anxious

curiosity about noon. The sight of the old farmhouse, though every trace of it was effaced from my recollection, affected me with a pleasure which I had not experienced for many a year. For though I had forgotten it, we had never forgotten being there together, and we had been talking about Mackery End all our lives, till memory on my part became mocked with a phantom of itself, and I thought I knew the aspect of a place which, when present, O how unlike it was to that which I had conjured up so many times instead of it!

Still the air breathed balmily about it; the season was in "the heart of June," and I could say with the poet,

But thou, that didst appear so fair To fond imagination, Dost rival in the light of day Her delicate creation!

Bridget's was more a waking bliss than mine, for she easily remembered her old acquaintance again—some altered features, of course, a little grudged at. At first, indeed, she was ready to disbelieve for joy; but the scene soon re-confirmed itself in her affections and she traversed every outpost of the old mansion, to the woodhouse, the orchard, the place where the pigeonhouse had stood (house and birds were alike flown) with a breathless impatience of recognition which was more pardonable perhaps than decorous at the age of fifty odd. But Bridget in some things is behind her years.

The only thing left was to get into the house—and that was a difficulty which to me singly would have been insurmountable; for I am terribly shy in making myself known to strangers and out-of-date kinsfolk. Love, stronger than scruple, winged my cousin in without me; but she soon returned with a creature that might have sat to a sculptor for the image of Welcome. It was the youngest of the Gladmans, who, by marriage with a Bruton, had become mistress of the old mansion. A comely brood are the Brutons. Six of them, females, were noted as the handsomest young women in the county. But this adopted Bruton, in my mind, was better than they all-more comely. She was born too late to have remembered me. She just recollected in early life to have had her cousin Bridget once pointed out to her, climbing a stile. But the name of kindred, and of cousinship, was enough. Those slender ties that prove slight as gossamer in the rending atmosphere of a metropolis, bind faster, as we found it, in hearty, homely, loving Hertfordshire. In five minutes we were as thoroughly acquainted as

if we had been born and bred up together; were familiar, even to the calling each other by our Christian names. So Christians should call one another. To have seen Bridget and her—it was like the meeting of the two scriptural cousins! There was a grace and dignity, an amplitude of form and stature answering to her mind, in this farmer's wife, which would have shined in a palace—or so we thought it. We were made welcome by husband and wife equally—we, and our friend that was with us. I had almost forgotten him, but B. F. will not so soon forget that meeting, if peradventure he shall read this on the far distant shores where the kangaroo haunts. The fatted calf was made ready, or rather was already so, as if in anticipation of our coming; and after an appropriate glass of native wine, never let me forget with what honest pride this hospitable cousin made us proceed to Wheathampstead, to introduce us (as some new-found rarity) to her mother and sister Gladmans, who did indeed know something more of us, at a time when she almost knew nothing. With what corresponding kindness we were received by them also. How Bridget's memory, exalted by the occasion, warmed into a thousand half-obliterated recollections of things and persons, to my utter astonishment, and her own-and to the astoundment of B. F., who sat by, almost the only thing that was not a cousin there, old effaced images of more than half-forgotten names and circumstances still crowding back upon her, as words written in lemon come out upon exposure to a friendly warmth. When I forget all this, then may my country cousins forget me; and Bridget no more remember, that in the days of weakling infancy I was her tender charge -as I have been her care in foolish manhood since-in those pretty pastoral walks, long ago, about Mackery End, in Hertfordshire.

MY FIRST PLAY

At the North end of cross court there yet stands a portal, of some architectural pretensions, though reduced to humble use, serving at present for an entrance to a printing office. This old doorway, if you are young, reader, you may not know was the identical pit entrance to old Drury—Garrick's Drury—all of it that is left. I never pass it without shaking some forty years from off my shoulders, recurring to the evening when I passed through it to see my first play. The afternoon had been wet, and the condition of our going (the elder folks and myself) was that the rain should cease. With what a beating

heart did I watch from the window the puddles, from the stillness of which I was taught to prognosticate the desired cessation! I seem to remember the last spurt and the glee with which I ran to announce it.

We went with orders, which my godfather F. had sent us. He kept the oil shop (now Davies') at the corner of Featherstone Buildings, in Holborn. F. was a tall grave person, lofty in speech, and had pretensions above his rank. He associated in those days with John Palmer. the comedian, whose gait and bearing he seemed to copy; if John (which is quite as likely) did not rather borrow somewhat of his manner from my godfather. He was also known to, and visited by, Sheridan. It was to his house in Holborn that young Brinsley brought his first wife on her elopement with him from a boarding school at Bath -the beautiful Maria Linley. My parents were present (over a quadrille table) when he arrived in the evening with his harmonious charge. From either of these connections it may be inferred that my godfather could command an order for the then Drury Lane theater at pleasure—and, indeed, a pretty liberal issue of those cheap billets, in Brinsley's easy autograph, I have heard him say was the sole remuneration which he had received for many years' nightly illumination of the orchestra and various avenues of that theater, and he was content it should be so. The honor of Sheridan's familiarity-or supposed familiarity—was better to my godfather than money.

F. was the most gentlemanly of oilmen; grandiloquent, yet courteous. His delivery of the commonest matters of fact was Ciceronian. He had two Latin words almost constantly in his mouth (how odd sounds Latin from an oilman's lips!), which my better knowledge since has enabled me to correct. In strict pronunciation they should have been sounded vice versa, but in those young years they impressed me with more awe than they would now do, read aright from Seneca or Varro, in his own peculiar pronunciation, monosyllabically elaborated, or Anglicized, into something like verse verse. By an imposing manner, and the help of these distorted syllables, he climbed (but that was little) to the highest parochial honors which St. Andrew's has to bestow.

He is dead; and thus much I thought due to his memory, both for my first orders (little wondrous talismans!—slight keys, and insignificant to outward sight, but opening to me more than Arabian paradises!) and moreover that by his testamentary beneficence I came into possession of the only landed property which I could ever call my own, situate near the roadway village of pleasant Puckeridge, in

Hertfordshire. When I journeyed down to take possession, and planted foot on my own ground, the stately habits of the donor descended upon me, and I strode (shall I confess the vanity?) with larger paces over my allotment of three-quarters of an acre, with its commodious mansion in the midst, with the feeling of an English freeholder that all betwixt sky and center was my own. The estate has passed into more prudent hands, and nothing but an agrarian can restore it.

In those days were pit orders. Beshrew the uncomfortable manager who abolished them! With one of these we went. I remember the waiting at the door—not that which is left, but between that and an inner door in shelter (O when shall I be such an expectant again!) with the cry of nonpareils, an indispensable playhouse accompaniment in those days. As near as I can recollect, the fashionable pronunciation of the theatrical fruiteresses then was, "Chase some oranges, chase some numparels, chase a bill of the play";—chase pro choose. But when we got in, and I beheld the green curtain that veiled a heaven to my imagination, which was soon to be disclosed—the breathless anticipations I endured! I had seen something like it in the plate prefixed to Troilus and Cressida, in Rowe's Shakespeare—the tent scene with Diomede—and a sight of that plate can always bring back in a measure the feeling of that evening. The boxes at that time, full of welldressed women of quality, projected over the pit, and the pilasters reaching down were adorned with a glistering substance (I know not what) under glass (as it seemed), resembling—a homely fancy—but I judged it to be sugar-candy; yet, to my raised imagination, divested of its homelier qualities, it appeared a glorified candy! The orchestra lights at length arose, those "fair Auroras"! Once the bell sounded. It was to ring out yet once again and, incapable of the anticipation, I reposed my shut eyes in a sort of resignation upon the maternal lap. It rang the second time. The curtain drew up—I was not past six years old, and the play was Artaxerxes!

I had dabbled a little in the Universal History—the ancient part of it—and here was the court of Persia. I was being admitted to a sight of the past. I took no proper interest in the action going on, for I understood not its import—but I heard the word Darius, and I was in the midst of Daniel. All feeling was absorbed in vision. Gorgeous vests, gardens, palaces, princesses, passed before me. I knew not players. I was in Persepolis for the time, and the burning idol of their devotion almost converted me into a worshiper. I was awe-struck, and believed those significations to be something more than elemental fires.

Essays of Elia

It was all enchantment and a dream. No such pleasure has since visited me but in dreams. Harlequin's invasion followed, where, I remember, the transformation of the magistrates into reverend beldams seemed to me a piece of grave historic justice, and the tailor carrying his own head to be as sober a verity as the legend of St. Denys.

The next play to which I was taken was the Lady of the Manor, of which, with the exception of some scenery, very faint traces are left in my memory. It was followed by a pantomime called Lun's Ghost—a satiric touch, I apprehend, upon Rich, not long since dead—but to my apprehension (too sincere for satire), Lun was as remote a piece of antiquity as Lud, the father of a line of Harlequins, transmitting his dagger of lath (the wooden scepter) through countless ages. I saw the primeval Motley come from his silent tomb in a ghastly vest of white patchwork, like the apparition of a dead rainbow. So Harlequins (thought I) look when they are dead.

My third play followed in quick succession. It was the Way of the World. I think I must have sat at it as grave as a judge; for, I remember, the hysteric affectations of good Lady Wishfort affected me like some solemn tragic passion. Robinson Crusoe followed; in which Crusoe, man Friday, and the parrot were as good and authentic as in the story. The clownery and pantaloonery of these pantomimes have clean passed out of my head. I believe I no more laughed at them than at the same age I should have been disposed to laugh at the grotesque Gothic heads (seeming to me then replete with devout meaning) that gape and grin in stone around the inside of the old Roman Church (my church) of the Templars.

I saw these plays in the season 1781-2, when I was from six to seven years old. After the intervention of six or seven other years (for at school all playgoing was inhibited) I again entered the doors of a theater. That old *Artaxerxes* evening had never done ringing in my fancy. I expected the same feelings to come again with the same occasion. But we differ from ourselves less at sixty and sixteen, than the latter does from six. In that interval what had I not lost! At the first period I knew nothing, understood nothing, discriminated nothing. I felt all, loved all, wondered all—

Was nourished, I could not tell how-

I had left the temple a devotee, and was returned a rationalist. The same things were there materially; but the emblem, the reference, was gone! The green curtain was no longer a veil, drawn between two

worlds, the unfolding of which was to bring back past ages to present a "royal ghost," but a certain quantity of green baize, which was to separate the audience for a given time from certain of their fellowmen who were to come forward and pretend those parts. The lights—the orchestra lights—came up a clumsy machinery. The first ring, and the second ring, was now but a trick of the prompter's bell, which had been, like the note of the cuckoo, a phantom of a voice, no hand seen or guessed at which ministered to its warning. The actors were men and women painted. I thought the fault was in them; but it was in myself, and the alteration which those many centuries-of six short twelvemonths-had wrought in me. Perhaps it was fortunate for me that the play of the evening was but an indifferent comedy, as it gave me time to crop some unreasonable expectations, which might have interfered with the genuine emotions with which I was soon after enabled to enter upon the first appearance to me of Mrs. Siddons in Isabella. Comparison and retrospection soon yielded to the present attraction of the scene; and the theater became to me, upon a new stock, the most delightful of recreations.

DREAM CHILDREN: A REVERIE

THILDREN LOVE TO LISTEN TO STORIES about their elders, when they were children; to stretch their imagination to the conception of a traditionary great-uncle, or grandame, whom they never saw. It was in this spirit that my little ones crept about me the other evening to hear about their great-grandmother Field, who lived in a great house in Norfolk (a hundred times bigger than that in which they and papa lived) which had been the scene—so at least it was generally believed in that part of the country—of the tragic incidents which they had lately become familiar with from the ballad of the Children in the Wood. Certain it is that the whole story of the children and their cruel uncle was to be seen fairly carved out in wood upon the chimney piece of the great hall, the whole story down to the Robin Redbreasts; till a foolish rich person pulled it down to set up a marble one of modern invention in its stead, with no story upon it. Here Alice put out one of dear mother's looks, too tender to be called upbraiding. Then I went on to say, how religious and how good their great-grandmother Field was, how beloved and respected by everybody, though she was not indeed the mistress of this great house, but had only the

charge of it (and yet in some respects she might be said to be the mistress of it too) committed to her by the owner, who preferred living in a newer and more fashionable mansion which he had purchased somewhere in the adjoining county; but still she lived in it in a manner as if it had been her own, and kept up the dignity of the great house in a sort while she lived, which afterward came to decay, and was nearly pulled down, and all its old ornaments stripped and carried away to the owner's other house, where they were set up, and looked as awkward as if someone were to carry away the old tombs they had seen lately at the Abbey, and stick them up in Lady C.'s tawdry gilt drawing room. Here John smiled, as much as to say, "that would be foolish indeed." And then I told how, when she came to die, her funeral was attended by a concourse of all the poor, and some of the gentry too, of the neighborhood for many miles round, to show their respect for her memory, because she had been such a good and religious woman; so good indeed that she knew all the Psaltery by heart, ay, and a great part of the Testament besides. Here little Alice spread her hands. Then I told what a tall, upright, graceful person their great-grand-mother Field once was; and how in her youth she was esteemed the best dancer—here Alice's little right foot played an involuntary movement, till, upon my looking grave, it desisted—the best dancer, I was saying, in the county, till a cruel disease, called a cancer, came, and bowed her down with pain; but it could never bend her good spirits, or make them stoop, but they were still upright, because she was so good and religious. Then I told how she was used to sleep by herself in a lone chamber of the great lone house; and how she believed that an apparition of two infants was to be seen at midnight gliding up and down the great staircase near where she slept, but she said "those innocents would do her no harm"; and how frightened I used to be, though in those days I had my maid to sleep with me, because I was never half so good or religious as she—and yet I never saw the infants. Here John expanded all his eyebrows and tried to look courageous. Then I told how good she was to all her grandchildren, having us to the great house in the holidays, where I in particular used to spend many hours by myself, in gazing upon the old busts of the twelve Caesars, that had been Emperors of Rome, till the old marble heads would seem to live again, or I to be turned into marble with them; how I never could be tired with roaming about that huge mansion, with its vast empty rooms, with their worn-out hangings, fluttering tapestry, and carved oaken panels, with the gilding almost rubbed out-some-

times in the spacious old-fashioned gardens, which I had almost to myself, unless when now and then a solitary gardening man would cross me—and how the nectarines and peaches hung upon the walls, without my ever offering to pluck them, because they were forbidden fruit, unless now and then, and because I had more pleasure in strolling about among the old melancholy-looking yew trees, or the firs, and picking up the red berries, and the fir apples, which were good for nothing but to look at; or in lying about upon the fresh grass with all the fine garden smells around me; or basking in the orangery, till I could almost fancy myself ripening too along with the oranges and the limes in that grateful warmth; or in watching the dace that darted to and fro in the fishpond, at the bottom of the garden, with here and there a great sulky pike hanging midway down the water in silent state, as if it mocked at their impertinent friskings; I had more pleasure in these busy-idle diversions than in all the sweet flavors of peaches, nectarines, oranges, and suchlike common baits of children. Here John slyly deposited back upon the plate a bunch of grapes, which, not unobserved by Alice, he had meditated dividing with her, and both seemed willing to relinquish them for the present as irrelevant. Then, in somewhat a more heightened tone, I told how, though their great-grandmother Field loved all her grandchildren, yet in an especial manner she might be said to love their uncle, John L----,* because he was so handsome and spirited a youth, and a king to the rest of us; and, instead of moping about in solitary corners, like some of us, he would mount the most mettlesome horse he could get, when but an imp no bigger than themselves, and make it carry him half over the county in a morning, and join the hunters when there were any out; and yet he loved the old great house and gardens too, but had too much spirit to be always pent up within their boundaries; and how their uncle grew up to man's estate as brave as he was handsome, to the admiration of everybody, but of their great-grandmother Field most especially; and how he used to carry me upon his back when I was a lame-footed boy-for he was a good bit older than me-many a mile when I could not walk for pain; and how in after life he became lame-footed too, and I did not always (I fear) make allowances enough for him when he was impatient, and in pain, nor remember sufficiently how considerate he had been to me when I was lamefooted; and how when he died, though he had not been dead an hour, it seemed as if he had died a great while ago, such a distance there is

^{*} Lamb's brother John

betwixt life and death; and how I bore his death as I thought pretty well at first, but afterward it haunted and haunted me; and though I did not cry or take it to heart as some do, and as I think he would have done if I had died, yet I missed him all day long, and knew not till then how much I had loved him. I missed his kindness, and I missed his crossness, and wished him to be alive again, to be quarreling with him (for we quarreled sometimes), rather than not have him again, and was as uneasy without him, as he their poor uncle must have been when the doctor took off his limb. Here the children fell a-crying, and asked if their little mourning which they had on was not for uncle John, and they looked up, and prayed me not to go on about their uncle, but to tell them some stories about their pretty dead mother. Then I told how for seven long years, in hope sometimes, sometimes in despair, yet persisting ever, I courted the fair Alice W-n; and, as much as children could understand, I explained to them what coyness, and difficulty, and denial, meant in maidens-when suddenly, turning to Alice, the soul of the first Alice looked out at her eyes with such a reality of re-presentment, that I became in doubt which of them stood there before me, or whose that bright hair was; and while I stood gazing, both the children gradually grew fainter to my view, receding, and still receding, till nothing at last but two mournful features were seen in the uttermost distance, which, without speech, strangely impressed upon me the effects of speech: "We are not of Alice, nor of thee, nor are we children at all. The children of Alice call Bartrum father. We are nothing; less than nothing, and dreams. We are only what might have been, and must wait upon the tedious shores of Lethe millions of ages before we have existence, and a name"----and immediately awaking, I found myself quietly seated in my bachelor armchair, where I had fallen asleep, with the faithful Bridget unchanged by my side—but John L. (or James Elia) was gone forever.

THE PRAISE OF CHIMNEY SWEEPERS

I LIKE TO MEET A SWEEP, understand me—not a grown sweeper (old chimney sweepers are by no means attractive) but one of those tender novices, blooming through their first nigritude, the maternal washings not quite effaced from the cheek; such as come forth with the dawn, or somewhat earlier, with their little professional notes sounding like the peep peep of a young sparrow; or liker to the matin

lark should I pronounce them, in their aerial ascents not seldom anticipating the sunrise?

I have a kindly yearning toward these dim specks, poor blots, innocent blacknesses.

I reverence these young Africans of our own growth—these almost clergy imps who sport their cloth without assumption and who from their little pulpits (the tops of chimneys) in the nipping air of a December morning preach a lesson of patience to mankind.

When a child, what a mysterious pleasure it was to witness their operation! to see a chit no bigger than oneself enter (one knew not by what process) into what seemed the fauces Averni; * to pursue him in imagination as he went sounding on through so many dark stifling caverns, horrid shades! to shudder with the idea that "now, surely, he must be lost forever!"; to revive at hearing his feeble shout of discovered daylight; and then (O fullness of delight!) running out of doors, to come just in time to see the sable phenomenon emerge in safety, the brandished weapon of his art victorious like some flag waved over a conquered citadel! I seem to remember having been told that a bad sweep was once left in a stack with his brush, to indicate which way the wind blew. It was an awful spectacle certainly; not much unlike the old stage direction in Macbeth, where the "Apparition of a child crowned, with a tree in his hand, rises."

Reader, if thou meetest one of these small gentry in thy early rambles, it is good to give him a penny. It is better to give him two-pence. If it be starving weather and, to the proper troubles of his hard occupation, a pair of kibed heels (no unusual accompaniment) be superadded, the demand on thy humanity will surely rise to a tester.

There is a composition, the groundwork of which I have understood to be the sweet wood y-clept sassafras. This wood boiled down to a kind of tea, and tempered with an infusion of milk and sugar, hath to some tastes a delicacy beyond the China luxury. I know not how thy palate may relish it; for myself, with every deference to the judicious Mr. Read, who hath time out of mind kept open a shop (the only one he avers in London) for the vending of this "wholesome and pleasant beverage," on the south side of Fleet Street as thou approachest Bridge Street in the only Salopian house, I have never yet adventured to dip my own particular lip in a basin of his commended ingredients—a cautious premonition to the olfactories constantly whispering to me that my stomach must infallibly, with all due courtesy, decline it.

^{*} Jaws of Hell

Essays of Elia

Yet I have seen palates, otherwise not uninstructed in dietetical elegancies, sup it up with avidity.

I know not by what particular conformation of the organ it happens, but I have always found that this composition is surprisingly gratifying to the palate of a young chimney sweeper—whether the oily particles (sassafras is slightly oleaginous) do attenuate and soften the fuliginous concretions which are sometimes found (in dissections) to adhere to the roof of the mouth in these unfledged practitioners; or whether Nature, sensible that she had mingled too much of bitter wood in the lot of these raw victims, caused to grow out of the earth her sassafras for a sweet lenitive—but so it is that no possible taste or odor to the senses of a young chimney sweeper can convey a delicate excitement comparable to this mixture. Being penniless, they will yet hang their black heads over the ascending steam to gratify one sense if possible, seemingly no less pleased than those domestic animals (cats) when they purr over a new-found sprig of valerian. There is something more in these sympathies than philosophy can inculcate.

Now albeit Mr. Read boasteth, not without reason, that his is the only Salopian house; yet be it known to thee, reader (if thou art one who keepest what are called good hours, thou art haply ignorant of the fact) he hath a race of industrious imitators, who from stalls and under open sky dispense the same savory mess to humbler customers at that dead time of the dawn when (as extremes meet) the rake reeling home from his midnight cups and the hardhanded artisan leaving his bed to resume the premature labors of the day jostle, not unfrequently to the manifest disconcerting of the former, for the honors of the pavement. It is the time when, in summer, between the expired and the not yet relumined kitchen fires, the kennels of our fair metropolis give forth their least satisfactory odors. The rake, who wisheth to dissipate his o'ernight vapors in more grateful coffee, curses the ungenial fume as he passeth; but the artisan stops to taste and blesses the fragrant breakfast.

This is saloop, the precocious herb-woman's darling, the delight of the early gardener who transports his smoking cabbages by break of day from Hammersmith to Covent Garden's famed piazzas, the delight and, oh! I fear too, often the envy of the unpennied sweep. Him shouldst thou haply encounter with his dim visage pendent over the grateful steam, regale him with a sumptuous basin (it will cost thee but three halfpennies) and a slice of delicate bread and butter (an added halfpenny); so may thy culinary fires, eased of the o'ercharged

secretions from thy worse-placed hospitalities, curl up a lighter volume to the welkin; so may the descending soot never taint thy costly well-ingredienced soups nor the odious cry, quick-reaching from street to street, of the *fired chimney* invite the rattling engines from ten adjacent parishes to disturb for a casual scintillation thy peace and pocket!

I am by nature extremely susceptible of street affronts, the ieers and taunts of the populace, the lowbred triumph they display over the casual trip or splashed stocking of a gentleman. Yet can I endure the jocularity of a young sweep with something more than forgiveness. In the last winter but one, pacing along Cheapside with my accustomed precipitation when I walk westward, a treacherous slide brought me upon my back in an instant. I scrambled up with pain and shame enough, yet outwardly trying to face it down, as if nothing had happened, when the roguish grin of one of these young wits encountered me. There he stood, pointing me out with his dusky finger to the mob and to a poor woman (I suppose his mother) in particular, till the tears for the exquisiteness of the fun (so he thought it) worked themselves out at the corners of his poor red eyes, red from many a previous weeping, and soot-inflamed, yet twinkling through all with such a joy snatched out of desolation that Hogarth — but Hogarth has got him already (how could he miss him?) in the March to Finchley, grinning at the pieman—there he stood, as he stands in the picture, irremovable, as if the jest was to last forever, with such a maximum of glee and minimum of mischief in his mirth (for the grin of a genuine sweep hath absolutely no malice in it) that I could have been content, if the honor of a gentleman might endure it, to have remained his butt and his mockery till midnight.

I am by theory obdurate to the seductiveness of what are called a fine set of teeth. Every pair of rosy lips (the ladies must pardon me) is a casket presumably holding such jewels; but, methinks, they should take leave to "air" them as frugally as possible. The fine lady or fine gentleman who show me their teeth show me bones. Yet must I confess that from the mouth of a true sweep a display (even to ostentation) of those white and shining ossifications strikes me as an agreeable anomaly in manners and an allowable piece of foppery. It is, as when

A sable cloud Turns forth her silver lining on the night.

It is like some remnant of gentry not quite extinct, a badge of better days, a hint of nobility—and doubtless, under the obscuring darkness

and double night of their forlorn disguisement, oftentimes lurk good blood and gentle conditions derived from lost ancestry and a lapsed pedigree. The premature apprenticements of these tender victims give but too much encouragement, I fear, to clandestine and almost infantile abductions; the seeds of civility and true courtesy so often discernible in these young grafts (not otherwise to be accounted for) plainly hint at some forced adoptions; many noble Rachels mourning for their children, even in our days, countenance the fact; the tales of fairy-spiriting may shadow a lamentable verity, and the recovery of the young Montagu be but a solitary instance of good fortune out of many irreparable and hopeless defiliations.

In one of the state beds at Arundel Castle, a few years ago—under a ducal canopy (that seat of the Howards is an object of curiosity to visitors chiefly for its beds, in which the late duke was especially a connoisseur) encircled with curtains of delicatest crimson, with starry coronets inwoven, folded between a pair of sheets whiter and softer than the lap where Venus lulled Ascanius—was discovered by chance, after all methods of search had failed, at noonday, fast asleep, a lost chimney sweeper. The little creature, having somehow confounded his passage among the intricacies of those lordly chimneys, by some unknown aperture had alighted upon this magnificent chamber; and, tired with his tedious explorations, was unable to resist the delicious invitement to repose, which he there saw exhibited; so creeping between the sheets very quietly, he laid his black head upon the pillow and slept like a young Howard.

Such is the account given to the visitors at the Castle. But I cannot help seeming to perceive a confirmation of what I had just hinted at in this story. A high instinct was at work in the case, or I am mistaken. Is it probable that a poor child of that description, with whatever weariness he might be visited, would have ventured, under such a penalty as he would be taught to expect, to uncover the sheets of a duke's bed and deliberately to lay himself down between them, when the rug or the carpet presented an obvious couch, still far above his pretensions? Is this probable, I would ask, if the great power of nature, which I contend for, had not been manifested within him, prompting to the adventure? Doubtless this young nobleman (for such my mind misgives me that he must be) was allured by some memory, not amounting to full consciousness, of his condition in infancy, when he was used to be lapped by his mother or his nurse in just such sheets as he there found, into which he was now but creeping back as into his

proper incunabula and resting place. By no other theory than by this sentiment of a pre-existent state (as I may call it) can I explain a deed so venturous and indeed, upon any other system, so indecorous in this tender but unseasonable sleeper.

My pleasant friend Jem White was so impressed with a belief of metamorphoses like this frequently taking place that, in some sort to reverse the wrongs of fortune in these poor changelings, he instituted an annual feast of chimney sweepers, at which it was his pleasure to officiate as host and waiter. It was a solemn supper held in Smithfield, upon the yearly return of the fair of St. Bartholomew. Cards were issued a week before to the master sweeps in and about the metropolis, confining the invitation to their younger fry. Now and then an elderly stripling would get in among us and be good-naturedly winked at; but our main body were infantry. One unfortunate wight indeed who, relying upon his dusky suit, had intruded himself into our party, but by tokens was providentially discovered in time to be no chimney sweeper (all is not soot which looks so), was quoited out of the presence with universal indignation, as not having on the wedding garment; but in general the greatest harmony prevailed. The place chosen was a convenient spot among the pens at the north side of the fair, not so far distant as to be impervious to the agreeable hubbub of that vanity; but remote enough not to be obvious to the interruption of every gaping spectator in it. The guests assembled about seven. In those little temporary parlors three tables were spread with napery, not so fine as substantial, and at every board a comely hostess presided with her pan of hissing sausages. The nostrils of the young rogues dilated at the savor.

James White, as head waiter, had charge of the first table; and myself, with our trusty companion Bigod, ordinarily ministered to the
other two. There were clambering and jostling, you may be sure, who
should get at the first table, for Rochester in his maddest days could
not have done the humors of the scene with more spirit than my friend.
After some general expression of thanks for the honor the company
had done him, his inaugural ceremony was to clasp the greasy waist of
old dame Ursula (the fattest of the three) who stood frying and fretting, half blessing, half cursing "the gentleman," and imprint upon her
chaste lips a tender salute, whereat the universal host would set up a
shout that tore the concave, while hundreds of grinning teeth startled
the night with their brightness. O it was a pleasure to see the sable
younkers lick in the unctuous meat, with his more unctuous sayings—

how he would fit the titbits to the puny mouths, reserving the lengthier links for the seniors; how he would intercept a morsel even in the jaws of some young desperado, declaring it "must to the pan again to be browned, for it was not fit for a gentleman's eating"; how he would recommend this slice of white bread or that piece of kissing-crust to a tender juvenile, advising them all to have a care of cracking their teeth, which were their best patrimony; how genteelly he would deal about the small ale, as if it were wine, naming the brewer and protesting, if it were not good, he should lose their custom, with a special recommendation to wipe the lip before drinking.

Then we had our toasts—"The King"—"the Cloth"—which, whether they understood or not, was equally diverting and flattering; and for a crowning sentiment, which never failed, "May the Brush supersede the Laurel!" All these and fifty other fancies, which were rather felt than comprehended by his guests, would he utter, standing upon tables and prefacing every sentiment with a "Gentlemen, give me leave to propose so and so," which was a prodigious comfort to those young orphans; every now and then stuffing into his mouth (for it did not do to be squeamish on these occasions) indiscriminate pieces of those reeking sausages, which pleased them mightily, and was the savoriest part, you may believe, of the entertainment.

Golden lads and lasses must, As chimney sweepers, come to dust—

James White is extinct, and with him these suppers have long ceased. He carried away with him half the fun of the world when he died—of my world at least. His old clients look for him among the pens; and, missing him, reproach the altered feast of St. Bartholomew and the glory of Smithfield departed forever.

A DISSERTATION UPON ROAST PIG

MANKIND, SAYS A CHINESE MANUSCRIPT, which my friend M. was obliging enough to read and explain to me, for the first seventy thousand ages ate their meat raw, clawing or biting it from the living animal, just as they do in Abyssinia to this day. This period is not obscurely hinted at by their great Confucius in the second chapter of his *Mundane Mutations*, where he designates a kind of golden age by the term *Chofang*, literally the Cooks' Holiday. The manuscript goes

on to say that the art of roasting or rather broiling (which I take to be the elder brother) was accidentally discovered in the manner following.

The swineherd, Ho-ti, having gone out into the woods one morning, as his manner was, to collect mast for his hogs, left his cottage in the care of his eldest son Bo-bo, a great lubberly boy who, being fond of playing with fire, as younkers of his age commonly are, let some sparks escape into a bundle of straw which, kindling quickly, spread the conflagration over every part of their poor mansion till it was reduced to ashes. Together with the cottage (a sorry antediluvian makeshift of a building, you may think it), what was of much more importance, a fine litter of new-farrowed pigs, no less than nine in number, perished. China pigs have been esteemed a luxury all over the East from the remotest periods that we read of. Bo-bo was in the utmost consternation, as you may think, not so much for the sake of the tenement, which his father and he could easily build up again with a few dry branches and the labor of an hour or two at any time, as for the loss of the pigs.

While he was thinking what he should say to his father and wringing his hands over the smoking remnants of one of those untimely sufferers, an odor assailed his nostrils, unlike any scent which he had before experienced. What could it proceed from?—not from the burnt cottage (he had smelt that smell before). Indeed this was by no means the first accident of the kind which had occurred through the negligence of this unlucky young firebrand. Much less did it resemble that of any known herb, weed or flower. A premonitory moistening at the same time overflowed his nether lip. He knew not what to think. He next stooped down to feel the pig, if there were any signs of life in it. He burned his fingers, and to cool them he applied them in his booby fashion to his mouth. Some of the crumbs of the scorched skin had come away with his fingers, and for the first time in his life (in the world's life indeed, for before him no man had known it) he tastedcrackling! Again he felt and fumbled at the pig. It did not burn him so much now; still he licked his fingers from a sort of habit. The truth at length broke into his slow understanding that it was the pig that smelt so and the pig that tasted so delicious; and surrendering himself up to the newborn pleasure, he fell to tearing up whole handfuls of the scorched skin with the flesh next it, and was cramming it down his throat in his beastly fashion, when his sire entered amid the smoking rafters, armed with retributory cudgel and, finding how affairs stood,

began to rain blows upon the young rogue's shoulders as thick as hailstones, which Bo-bo heeded not any more than if they had been flies. The tickling pleasure which he experienced in his lower regions had rendered him quite callous to any inconveniences he might feel in those remote quarters. His father might lay on, but he could not beat him from his pig till he had fairly made an end of it, when, becoming a little more sensible of his situation, something like the following dialogue ensued.

"You graceless whelp, what have you got there devouring? Is it not enough that you have burned me down three houses with your dog's tricks, and be hanged to you! but you must be eating fire, and I know not what—what have you got there, I say?"

"O Father, the pig, the pig! Do come and taste how nice the burned pig eats."

The ears of Ho-ti tingled with horror. He cursed his son and he cursed himself that ever he should beget a son that should eat burned pig.

Bo-bo, whose scent was wonderfully sharpened since morning, soon raked out another pig, and fairly rending it asunder, thrust the lesser half by main force into the fists of Ho-ti, still shouting out, "Eat, eat, eat the burned pig, Father, only taste—O Lord!"—with suchlike barbarous ejaculations, cramming all the while as if he would choke.

Ho-ti trembled every joint while he grasped the abominable thing, wavering whether he should not put his son to death for an unnatural young monster, when the crackling scorching his fingers, as it had done his son's, and applying the same remedy to them, he in his turn tasted some of its flavor, which, make what sour mouths he would for a pretense, proved not altogether displeasing to him. In conclusion (for the manuscript here is a little tedious), both father and son fairly set down to the mess, and never left off till they had despatched all that remained of the litter.

Bo-bo was strictly enjoined not to let the secret escape, for the neighbors would certainly have stoned them for a couple of abominable wretches, who could think of improving upon the good meat which God had sent them. Nevertheless, strange stories got about. It was observed that Ho-ti's cottage was burned down now more frequently than ever. Nothing but fires from this time forward. Some would break out in broad day, others in the nighttime. As often as the sow farrowed, so sure was the house of Ho-ti to be in a blaze; and Ho-ti himself, which was the more remarkable, instead of chastising

his son, seemed to grow more indulgent to him than ever. At length they were watched, the terrible mystery discovered, and father and son summoned to take their trial at Peking, then an inconsiderable assize town. Evidence was given, the obnoxious food itself produced in court, and verdict about to be pronounced, when the foreman of the jury begged that some of the burned pig, of which the culprits stood accused, might be handed into the box. He handled it and they all handled it; and, burning their fingers as Bo-bo and his father had done before them, and nature prompting to each of them the same remedy, against the face of all the facts and the clearest charge which judge had ever given—to the surprise of the whole court, townsfolk, strangers, reporters and all present—without leaving the box or any manner of consultation whatever, they brought in a simultaneous verdict of Not Guilty.

The judge, who was a shrewd fellow, winked at the manifest iniquity of the decision; and when the court was dismissed, went privily and bought up all the pigs that could be had for love or money. In a few days his lordship's townhouse was observed to be on fire. The thing took wing, and now there was nothing to be seen but fire in every direction. Fuel and pigs grew enormously dear all over the district. The insurance offices one and all shut up shop. People built slighter and slighter every day, until it was feared that the very science of architecture would in no long time be lost to the world. Thus this custom of firing houses continued, till in process of time, says my manuscript, a sage arose, like our Locke, who made a discovery that the flesh of swine, or indeed of any other animal, might be cooked (burned, as they called it) without the necessity of consuming a whole house to dress it. Then first began the rude form of a gridiron. Roasting by the string or spit came in a century or two later (I forget in whose dynasty). By such slow degrees, concludes the manuscript, do the most useful and seemingly the most obvious arts make their way among mankind.

Without placing too implicit faith in the account above given, it must be agreed that if a worthy pretext for so dangerous an experiment as setting houses on fire (especially in these days) could be assigned in favor of any culinary object, that pretext and excuse might be found in ROAST PIG.

Of all the delicacies in the whole *mundus edibilis*,* I will maintain it to be the most delicate.

^{*} Edible world

I speak not of your grown porkers—things between pig and pork, those hobbydehoys—but a young and tender suckling under a moon old, guiltless as yet of the sty, with no original speck of the amor immunditae,† the hereditary failing of the first parent, yet manifest; his voice as yet not broken, but something between a childish treble and a grumble, the mild forerunner of a grunt.

He must be roasted. I am not ignorant that our ancestors ate them seethed or boiled—but what a sacrifice to the exterior tegument!

There is no flavor comparable, I will contend, to that of the crisp, tawny, well-watched, not over-roasted crackling, as it is well called; the very teeth are invited to their share of the pleasure at this banquet in overcoming the coy, brittle resistance with the adhesive oleaginous—O call it not fat! but an indefinable sweetness growing up to it—the tender blossoming of fat—fat cropped in the bud, taken in the shoot, in the first innocence, the cream and quintessence of the child-pig's yet pure food—the lean, no lean, but a kind of animal manna or, rather, fat and lean (if it must be so) so blended and running into each other that both together make but one ambrosian result or common substance.

Behold him, while he is "doing"; it seemeth rather a refreshing warmth than a scorching heat that he is so passive to. How equably he twirleth round the string! Now he is just done. To see the extreme sensibility of that tender age! He hath wept out his pretty eyes—radiant jellies, shooting stars.

See him in the dish, his second cradle, how meek he lieth! Wouldst thou have had this innocent grow up to the grossness and indocility which too often accompany maturer swinehood? Ten to one he would have proved a glutton, a sloven, an obstinate disagreeable animal, wallowing in all manner of filthy conversation; from these sins he is happily snatched away:

Ere sin could blight or sorrow fade, Death came with timely care . . .

His memory is odoriferous; no clown curseth, while his stomach half rejecteth, the rank bacon; no coal-heaver bolteth him in reeking sausages; he hath a fair sepulcher in the grateful stomach of the judicious epicure and for such a tomb might be content to die.

He is the best of sapors. Pineapple is great. She is indeed almost too transcendent—a delight, if not sinful, yet so like to sinning that the Love of filth

really a tender-conscienced person would do well to pause; too ravishing for mortal taste, she woundeth and excoriateth the lips that approach her; like lovers' kisses, she biteth; she is a pleasure bordering on pain from the fierceness and insanity of her relish, but she stoppeth at the palate; she meddleth not with the appetite, and the coarsest hunger might barter her consistently for a muttonchop.

Pig—let me speak his praise—is no less provocative of the appetite than he is satisfactory to the criticalness of the censorious palate. The strong man may batten on him, and the weakling refuseth not his mild juices.

Unlike mankind's mixed characters, a bundle of virtues and vices, inexplicably intertwisted and not to be unraveled without hazard, he is—good throughout. No part of him is better or worse than another. He helpeth, as far as his little means extend, all around. He is the least envious of banquets. He is all neighbors' fare.

I am one of those who freely and ungrudgingly impart a share of the good things of this life which fall to their lot (few as mine are in this kind) to a friend. I protest I take as great an interest in my friend's pleasures, his relishes and proper satisfactions, as in mine own. "Presents," I often say, "endear Absents." Hares, pheasants, partridges, snipes, barndoor chickens (those "tame villatic fowl"), capons, plovers, brawn, barrels of oysters I dispense as freely as I receive them. I love to taste them, as it were, upon the tongue of my friend. But a stop must be put somewhere. One would not, like Lear, "give everything." I make my stand upon pig. Methinks it is an ingratitude to the Giver of all good flavors to extra-domiciliate or send out of the house slightingly (under pretext of friendship or I know not what) a blessing so particularly adapted, predestined, I may say, to my individual palate. It argues an insensibility.

I remember a touch of conscience in this kind at school. My good old aunt, who never parted from me at the end of a holiday without stuffing a sweetmeat or some nice thing into my pocket, had dismissed me one evening with a smoking plum cake, fresh from the oven. On my way to school (it was over London Bridge) a gray-headed old beggar saluted me (I have no doubt, at this time of day, that he was a counterfeit). I had no pence to console him with, and in the vanity of self-denial and the very coxcombry of charity, schoolboy-like, I made him a present of—the whole cake! I walked on a little, buoyed up as one is on such occasions, with a sweet soothing of self-satisfaction; but before I had got to the end of the bridge, my better feelings re-

turned, and I burst into tears, thinking how ungrateful I had been to my good aunt to go and give her good gift away to a stranger that I had never seen before, and who might be a bad man for aught I knew; and then I thought of the pleasure my aunt would be taking in thinking that I—I myself, and not another—would eat her nice cake, and what should I say to her the next time I saw her? How naughty I was to part with her pretty present! And the odor of that spicy cake came back upon my recollection, and the pleasure and the curiosity I had taken in seeing her make it, and her joy when she sent it to the oven, and how disappointed she would feel that I had never had a bit of it in my mouth at last; and I blamed my impertinent spirit of almsgiving and out-of-place hypocrisy of goodness; and above all I wished never to see the face again of that insidious, good-for-nothing, old gray impostor.

Our ancestors were nice in their method of sacrificing these tender victims. We read of pigs whipped to death with something of a shock, as we hear of any other obsolete custom. The age of discipline is gone by, or it would be curious to inquire (in a philosophical light merely) what effect this process might have towards intenerating and dulcifying a substance naturally so mild and dulcet as the flesh of young pigs. It looks like refining a violet. Yet we should be cautious, while we condemn the inhumanity, how we censure the wisdom of the practice. It might impart a gusto.

I remember a hypothesis argued upon by the young students when I was at St. Omer's, and maintained with much learning and pleasantry on both sides: "Whether, supposing that the flavor of a pig who obtained his death by whipping (per flagellationem extremam) superadded a pleasure upon the palate of a man more intense than any possible suffering we can conceive in the animal, is man justified in using that method of putting the animal to death?" I forget the decision.

His sauce should be considered. Decidedly, a few bread crumbs, done up with his liver and brains, and a dash of mild sage. But banish, dear Mrs. Cook, I beseech you, the whole onion tribe. Barbecue your whole hogs to your palate, steep them in shalots, stuff them out with plantations of the rank and guilty garlic; you cannot poison them or make them stronger than they are; but consider, he is a weakling, a flower.

BLAKESMOOR IN H----SHIRE

DO NOT KNOW A PLEASURE MORE AFFECTING than to range at will over the deserted apartments of some first life. over the deserted apartments of some fine old family mansion. The traces of extinct grandeur admit of a better passion than envy; and contemplations on the great and good, whom we fancy in succession to have been its inhabitants, weave for us illusions, incompatible with the bustle of modern occupancy and vanities of foolish present aristocracy. The same difference of feeling, I think, attends us between entering an empty and a crowded church. In the latter it is chance but some present human frailty (an act of inattention on the part of some of the auditory or a trait of affectation or, worse, vainglory on that of the preacher) puts us by our best thoughts, disharmonizing the place and the occasion. But wouldst thou know the beauty of holiness? Go alone on some weekday, borrowing the keys of good Master Sexton, traverse the cool aisles of some country church; think of the piety that has kneeled there—the congregations, old and young, that have found consolation there, the meek pastor, the docile parishioner. With no disturbing emotions, no cross conflicting comparisons, drink in the tranquillity of the place till thou thyself become as fixed and motionless as the marble effigies that kneel and weep around thee.

Journeying northward lately, I could not resist going some few miles out of my road to look upon the remains of an old great house with which I had been impressed in this way in infancy. I was apprised that the owner of it had lately pulled it down; still I had a vague notion that it could not all have perished, that so much solidity with magnificence could not have been crushed all at once into the mere dust and rubbish which I found it.

The work of ruin had proceeded with a swift hand indeed, and the demolition of a few weeks had reduced it to—an antiquity.

I was astonished at the indistinction of everything. Where had stood the great gates? What bounded the courtyard? Whereabout did the outhouses commence? A few bricks only lay as representatives of that which was so stately and so spacious.

Death does not shrink up his human victim at this rate. The burned ashes of a man weigh more in their proportion.

Had I seen these brick-and-mortar knaves at their process of destruction, at the plucking of every panel, I should have felt the varlets

at my heart. I should have cried out to them to spare a plank at least out of the cheerful storeroom, in whose hot window seat I used to sit and read Cowley, with the grassplot before, and the hum and flappings of that one solitary wasp that ever haunted it about me; it is in mine ears now, as oft as summer returns; or a panel of the yellow room.

Why, every plank and panel of that house for me had magic in it. The tapestried bedrooms (tapestry so much better than painting) not adorning merely, but peopling the wainscots; at which childhood ever and anon would steal a look, shifting its coverlid (replaced as quickly) to exercise its tender courage in a momentary eye-encounter with those stern bright visages staring reciprocally; all Ovid on the walls, in colors vivider than his descriptions: Actaeon in mid-sprout, with the unappeasable prudery of Diana; and the still more provoking and almost culinary coolness of Dan Phoebus, eel-fashion, deliberately divesting Marsyas.

Then that haunted room in which old Mrs. Battle died, whereinto I have crept, but always in the daytime, with a passion of fear; and a sneaking curiosity, terror-tainted, to hold communication with the past. How shall they build it up again?

It was an old deserted place, yet not so long deserted but that traces of the splendor of past inmates were everywhere apparent. Its furniture was still standing—even to the tarnished gilt leather battledores and crumbling feathers of shuttlecocks in the nursery, which told that children had once played there. But I was a lonely child and had the range at will of every apartment, knew every nook and corner, wondered and worshiped everywhere.

The solitude of childhood is not so much the mother of thought, as it is the feeder of love and silence and admiration. So strange a passion for the place possessed me in those years that, though there lay—I shame to say how few roods distant from the mansion—half hid by trees, what I judged some romantic lake; such was the spell which bound me to the house and such my carefulness not to pass its strict and proper precincts, that the idle waters lay unexplored for me; and not till late in life, curiosity prevailing over elder devotion, I found, to my astonishment, a pretty brawling brook had been the Unknown Lake of my infancy. Variegated views, extensive prospects (and those at no great distance from the house), I was told of such. What were they to me, being out of the boundaries of my Eden? So far from a wish to roam, I would have drawn, methought, still closer the fences of my chosen prison and been hemmed in by a yet securer cincture of

those excluding garden walls. I could have exclaimed with that gardenloving poet:

> Bind me, ye woodbines, in your twines; Curl me about, ye gadding vines; And oh so close your circles lace, That I may never leave this place; But, lest your fetters prove too weak, Ere I your silken bondage break, Do you, O brambles, chain me too, And, courteous briars, nail me through.

I was here as in a lonely temple. Snug firesides, the low-built roof, parlors ten feet by ten, frugal boards and all the homeliness of home—these were the condition of my birth, the wholesome soil which I was planted in. Yet, without impeachment to their tenderest lessons, I am not sorry to have had glances at something beyond; and to have taken, if but a peep in childhood, at the contrasting accidents of a great fortune.

To have the feeling of gentility, it is not necessary to have been born gentle. The pride of ancestry may be had on cheaper terms than to be obliged to an importunate race of ancestors; and the coatless antiquary in his unemblazoned cell, revolving the long line of a Mowbray's or De Clifford's pedigree, at those sounding names may warm himself into as gay a vanity as these who do inherit them. The claims of birth are ideal merely, and what herald shall go about to strip me of an idea? Is it trenchant to their swords? can it be hacked off as a spur can? or torn away like a tarnished garter?

What else were the families of the great to us? What pleasure should we take in their tedious genealogies or their capitulatory brass monuments? What to us the uninterrupted current of their bloods, if our own did not answer within us to a cognate and correspondent elevation?

Or wherefore else, O tattered and diminished 'Scutcheon that hung upon the time-worn walls of thy princely stairs, Blakesmoor! Have I in childhood so oft stood poring upon the mystic characters, thy emblematic supporters with their prophetic *Resurgam*,* till, every dreg of peasantry purging off, I received into myself Very Gentility? Thou wert first in my morning eyes; and of nights hast detained my steps from bedward, till it was but a step from gazing at thee to dreaming on thee.

^{*} I shall rise again.

This is the only true gentry by adoption; the veritable change of blood and not, as empirics have fabled, by transfusion.

Who it was by dying that had earned the splendid trophy, I know

Who it was by dying that had earned the splendid trophy, I know not, I inquired not; but its fading rags and colors cobweb-stained told that its subject was of two centuries back.

And what if my ancestor at that date was some Damoetas feeding flocks not his own upon the hills of Lincoln? Did I in less earnest vindicate to myself the family trappings of this once proud Aegon, repaying by a backward triumph the insults he might possibly have heaped in his lifetime upon my poor pastoral progenitor?

If it were presumption so to speculate, the present owners of the mansion had least reason to complain. They had long forsaken the old house of their fathers for a newer trifle; and I was left to appropriate to myself what images I could pick up, to raise my fancy or to soothe my vanity.

I was the true descendant of those old W——s; and not the present family of that name, who had fled the old waste places.

Mine was that gallery of good old family portraits which, as I have gone over, giving them in fancy my own family name, one—and then another—would seem to smile, reaching forward from the canvas, to recognize the new relationship; while the rest looked grave, as it seemed, at the vacancy in their dwelling and thoughts of fled posterity.

The Beauty with the cool blue pastoral drapery and a lamb (that hung next the great bay window) with the bright yellow H——shire hair and eye of watchet hue—so like my Alice!—I am persuaded she was a true Elia—Mildred Elia, I take it.

Mine, too, Blakesmoor, was thy noble Marble Hall, with its mosaic pavements and its Twelve Caesars—stately busts in marble—ranged around; of whose countenances, young reader of faces as I was, the frowning beauty of Nero, I remember, had most of my wonder; but the mild Galba had my love. There they stood in the coldness of death, yet the freshness of immortality.

Mine too thy lofty Justice Hall, with its one chair of authority, high-backed and wickered, once the terror of luckless poacher or self-forgetful maiden—so common since, that bats have roosted in it.

Mine too—whose else?—thy costly fruit garden, with its sunbaked southern wall; the ampler pleasure garden, rising backward from the house in triple terraces, with flowerpots now of palest lead, save that a speck here and there, saved from the elements, bespoke their pristine state to have been gilt and glittering; the verdant quarters backwarder

still; and, stretching still beyond, in old formality, thy firry wilderness, the haunt of the squirrel and the day-long murmuring wood pigeon, with that antique image in the center, god or goddess I wist not; but child of Athens or old Rome paid never a sincerer worship to Pan or to Sylvanus in their native groves, than I to that fragmental mystery.

Was it for this that I kissed my childish hands too fervently in your idol worship, walks and windings of Blakesmoor! For this, or what sin of mine, has the plough passed over your pleasant places? I sometimes think that as men, when they die, do not die all, so of their extinguished habitations there may be a hope—a germ to be revivified.

POOR RELATIONS

A POOR RELATION is the most irrelevant thing in nature—a piece of impertinent correspondency, an odious approximation, a haunting conscience, a preposterous shadow lengthening in the noontide of our prosperity, an unwelcome remembrancer, a perpetually recurring mortification, a drain on your purse, a more intolerable dun upon your pride, a drawback upon success, a rebuke to your rising, a stain in your blood, a blot on your 'scutcheon, a rent in your garment, a death's-head at your banquet, Agathocles' pot, a Mordecai in your gate, a Lazarus at your door, a lion in your path, a frog in your chamber, a fly in your ointment, a mote in your eye, a triumph to your enemy, an apology to your friends, the one thing not needful, the hail in harvest, the ounce of sour in a pound of sweet.

He is known by his knock. Your heart telleth you "That is Mr.—." A rap, between familiarity and respect, that demands, and at the same time seems to despair of, entertainment. He entereth smiling and—embarrassed. He holdeth out his hand to you to shake and—draweth it back again. He casually looketh in about dinner time—when the table is full. He offereth to go away, seeing you have company, but is induced to stay. He filleth a chair, and your visitor's two children are accommodated at a side-table. He never cometh upon open days, when your wife says, with some complacency, "My dear, perhaps Mr.——will drop in today." He remembereth birthdays—and professeth he is fortunate to have stumbled upon one. He declareth against fish, the turbot being small—yet suffereth himself to be importuned into a slice, against his first resolution. He sticketh by the port—yet will be prevailed upon to empty the remainder glass of

claret if a stranger press it upon him. He is a puzzle to the servants, who are fearful of being too obsequious or not civil enough to him. The guests think "they have seen him before." Everyone speculateth upon his condition; and the most part take him to be—a tidewaiter. He calleth you by your Christian name, to imply that his other is the same with your own. He is too familiar by half, yet you wish he had less diffidence. With half the familiarity, he might pass for a casual dependent; with more boldness, he would be in no danger of being taken for what he is. He is too humble for a friend; yet taketh on him more state than befits a client.

He is a worse guest than a country tenant, inasmuch as he bringeth up no rent-yet 'tis odds, from his garb and demeanor, that your guests take him for one. He is asked to make one at the whist table, refuseth on the score of poverty and—resents being left out. When the company break up, he proffereth to go for a coach—and lets the servant go. He recollects your grandfather; and will thrust in some mean and quite unimportant anecdote of the family. He knew it when it was not quite so flourishing as "he is blessed in seeing it now." He reviveth past situations, to institute what he calleth-favorable comparisons. With a reflecting sort of congratulation, he will inquire the price of your furniture; and insults you with a special commendation of your window curtains. He is of the opinion that the urn is the more elegant shape, but, after all, there was something more comfortable about the old teakettle—which you must remember. He dare say you must find a great convenience in having a carriage of your own, and appealeth to your lady if it is not so. Inquireth if you have had your arms done on vellum yet; and did not know, till lately, that such-andsuch had been the crest of the family. His memory is unseasonable; his compliments perverse; his talk a trouble; his stay pertinacious; and when he goeth away, you dismiss his chair into a corner as precipitately as possible and feel fairly rid of two nuisances.

There is a worse evil under the sun, and that is—a female Poor Relation. You may do something with the other; you may pass him off tolerably well; but your indigent she-relative is hopeless. "He is an old humorist," you may say, "and affects to go threadbare. His circumstances are better than folks would take them to be. You are fond of having a Character at your table, and truly he is one." But in the indications of female poverty, there can be no disguise. No woman dresses below herself from caprice. The truth must out without shuffling. "She is plainly related to the L——s; or what does she at

their house?" She is, in all probability, your wife's cousin. Nine times out of ten, at least, this is the case. Her garb is something between a gentlewoman and a beggar, yet the former evidently predominates. She is most provokingly humble and ostentatiously sensible to her inferiority. He may require to be repressed sometimes, but there is no raising her. You send her soup at dinner, and she begs to be helped—after the gentlemen. Mr. ——requests the honor of taking wine with her; she hesitates between Port and Madeira, and chooses the former—because he does. She calls the servant Sir and insists on not troubling him to hold her plate. The housekeeper patronizes her. The children's governess takes upon her to correct her when she has mistaken the piano for harpsichord.

Richard Amlet, Esq., in the play, is a notable instance of the disadvantages to which this chimerical notion of affinity constituting a claim to acquaintance may subject the spirit of a gentleman. A little foolish blood is all that is between him and a lady with a great estate. His stars are perpetually crossed by the malignant maternity of an old woman who persists in calling him "her son Dick." But she has wherewithal in the end to recompense his indignities and float him again upon the brilliant surface, under which it has been her seeming business and pleasure all along to sink him. All men, besides, are not of Dick's temperament. I knew an Amlet in real life, who, wanting Dick's buoyancy, sank indeed.

Poor W—— was of my own standing at Christ's, a fine classic and a youth of promise. If he had a blemish, it was too much pride; but its quality was inoffensive; it was not of that sort which hardens the heart and serves to keep inferiors at a distance; it only sought to ward off derogation from itself. It was the principle of self-respect carried as far as it could go, without infringing upon that respect, which he would have everyone else equally maintain for himself. He would have you think alike with him on this topic. Many a quarrel have I had with him, when we were rather older boys, and our tallness made us more obnoxious to observation in the blue clothes, because I would not thread the alleys and blind ways of the town with him to elude notice, when we have been out together on a holiday in the streets of this sneering and prying metropolis.

W—— went, sore with these notions, to Oxford, where the dignity and sweetness of a scholar's life, meeting with the alloy of a humble introduction, wrought in him a passionate devotion to the place, with a profound aversion from the society. The servitor's gown (worse

than his school array) clung to him with Nessian venom. He thought himself ridiculous in a garb, under which Latimer must have walked erect, and in which Hooker, in his young days, possibly flaunted in a vein of no discommendable vanity. In the depth of college shades or in his lonely chamber, the poor student shrunk from observation. He found shelter among books, which insult not; and studies, that ask no questions of a youth's finances. He was lord of his library and seldom cared for looking out beyond his domains. The healing influence of studious pursuits was upon him, to soothe and to abstract. He was almost a healthy man when the waywardness of his fate broke out against him with a second and worse malignity. The father of Whad hitherto exercised the humble profession of housepainter at N-, near Oxford. A supposed interest with some of the heads of colleges had now induced him to take up his abode in that city, with the hope of being employed upon some public works which were talked of. From that moment I read in the countenance of the young man the determination which at length tore him from academical pursuits forever. To a person unacquainted with our universities, the distance between the gownsmen and the townsmen, as they are called —the trading part of the latter especially—is carried to an excess that would appear harsh and incredible. The temperament of W——'s father was diametrically the reverse of his own. Old W—— was a little, busy, cringing tradesman who, with his son upon his arm, would stand bowing and scraping, cap in hand, to anything that wore the semblance of a gown, insensible to the winks and opener remonstrances of the young man, to whose chamberfellow, or equal in standing, perhaps, he was thus obsequiously and gratuitously ducking.

Such a state of things could not last. W—— must change the air of

Such a state of things could not last. W—— must change the air of Oxford, or be suffocated. He chose the former; and let the sturdy moralist, who strains the point of filial duties as high as they can bear, censure the dereliction; he cannot estimate the struggle. I stood with W—— the last afternoon I ever saw him under the eaves of his paternal dwelling. It was in the fine lane leading from High Street to the back of the college where W—— kept his rooms. He seemed thoughtful and more reconciled. I ventured to rally him, finding him in a better mood, upon a representation of the Artist Evangelist, which the old man, whose affairs were beginning to flourish, had caused to be set up in a splendid sort of frame over his really handsome shop, either as a token of prosperity or badge of gratitude to his saint. W—— looked up at the Luke, and, like Satan, "knew his mounted sign—and

fled." A letter on his father's table the next morning announced that he had accepted a commission in a regiment about to embark for Portugal. He was among the first who perished before the walls of St. Sebastian.

I do not know how, upon a subject which I began with treating half seriously, I should have fallen upon a recital so eminently painful; but this theme of poor relationship is replete with so much matter for tragic as well as comic associations, that it is difficult to keep the account distinct without blending. The earliest impressions which I received on this matter are certainly not attended with anything painful or very humiliating in the recalling. At my father's table (no very splendid one) was to be found every Saturday the mysterious figure of an aged gentleman clothed in neat black, of a sad yet comely appearance. His deportment was of the essence of gravity; his words few or none; and I was not to make a noise in his presence. I had little inclination to have done so-for my cue was to admire in silence. A particular elbow chair was appropriated to him, which was in no case to be violated. A peculiar sort of sweet pudding, which appeared on no other occasion, distinguished the days of his coming. I used to think him a prodigiously rich man. All I could make out of him was that he and my father had been schoolfellows a world ago at Lincoln, and that he came from the Mint. The Mint I knew to be a place where all the money was coined—and I thought he was the owner of all that money. Awful ideas of the Tower twined themselves about his presence. He seemed above human infirmities and passions. A sort of melancholy grandeur invested him. From some inexplicable doom I fancied him obliged to go about in an eternal suit of mourning; a captive, a stately being let out of the Tower on Saturdays.

Often have I wondered at the temerity of my father, who, in spite of a habitual general respect which we all in common manifested toward him, would venture now and then to stand up against him in some argument touching their youthful days. The houses of the ancient city of Lincoln are divided (as, most of my readers know) between the dwellers on the hill and in the valley. This marked distinction formed an obvious division between the boys who lived above (however brought together in a common school) and the boys whose paternal residence was on the plain; a sufficient cause of hostility in the code of these young Grotiuses. My father had been a leading Mountaineer; and would still maintain the general superiority, in skill and hardihood, of the Above Boys (his own faction) over the Below Boys

(so were they called), of which party his contemporary had been a chieftain. Many and hot were the skirmishes on this topic (the only one upon which the old gentleman was ever brought out) and bad blood bred; even sometimes almost to the recommencement (so I expected) of actual hostilities. But my father, who scorned to insist upon advantages, generally contrived to turn the conversation upon some adroit by-commendation of the old Minster; in the general preference of which, before all other cathedrals in the island, the dweller on the hill and the plain-born could meet on a conciliating level and lay down their less important differences.

Once only I saw the old gentleman really ruffled, and I remembered with anguish the thought that came over me: "Perhaps he will never come here again." He had been pressed to take another plate of the viand, which I have already mentioned as the indispensable concomitant of his visits. He had refused with a resistance amounting to rigor, when my aunt, an old Lincolnian, but who had something of this in common with my cousin Bridget, that she would sometimes press civility out of season, uttered the following memorable application, "Do take another slice, Mr. Billet, for you do not get pudding every day." The old gentleman said nothing at the time, but he took occasion in the course of the evening, when some argument had intervened between them, to utter with an emphasis which chilled the company and which chills me now as I write it: "Woman, you are superannuated!"

John Billet did not survive long after the digesting of this affront; but he survived long enough to assure me that peace was actually restored! And, if I remember aright, another pudding was discreetly substituted in the place of that which had occasioned the offense. He died at the Mint (anno 1781), where he had long held what he accounted a comfortable independence; and with five pounds, fourteen shillings and a penny, which were found in his escritoire after his decease, left the world, blessing God that he had enough to bury him and that he had never been obliged to any man for a sixpence. This was—a Poor Relation.

THE SUPERANNUATED MAN

Sera tamen respexit
Libertas. —VERGIL
A Clerk I was in London gay.—O'KEEFE

I F PERADVENTURE, READER, it has been thy lot to waste the golden years of thy life, thy shining youth, in the irksome confinement of an office, to have thy prison days prolonged through middle age down to decrepitude and silver hairs without hope of release or respite, to have lived to forget that there are such things as holidays, or to remember them but as the prerogatives of childhood, then and then only, will you be able to appreciate my deliverance.

It is now six-and-thirty years since I took my seat at the desk in Mincing Lane. Melancholy was the transition at fourteen from the abundant playtime and the frequently intervening vacations of school days to the eight, nine and sometimes ten hours' a day attendance at the counting house. But time partially reconciles us to anything. I gradually became content—doggedly contented, as wild animals in cages.

It is true I had my Sundays to myself; but Sundays, admirable as the institution of them is for purposes of worship, are for that very reason the very worst adapted for days of unbending and recreation. In particular, there is a gloom for me attendant upon a city Sunday, a weight in the air. I miss the cheerful cries of London, the music and the ballad singers—the buzz and stirring murmur of the streets. Those eternal bells depress me. The closed shops repel me. Prints, pictures, all the glittering and endless succession of knacks and gewgaws and ostentatiously displayed wares of tradesmen which make a weekday saunter through the less busy parts of the metropolis so delightful are shut out. No bookstalls deliciously to idle over. No busy faces to recreate the idle man who contemplates them ever passing by—the very face of business a charm by contrast to his temporary relaxation from it. Nothing to be seen but unhappy countenances—or half-happy at best-of emancipated 'prentices and little tradesfolk, with here and there a servant maid that has got leave to go out, who, slaving all the week, with the habit has lost almost the capacity of enjoying a free hour; and livelily expressing the hollowness of a day's pleasuring. The very strollers in the fields on that day look anything but comfortable.

But besides Sundays, I had a day at Easter and a day at Christmas,

with a full week in the summer to go and air myself in my native fields of Hertfordshire. This last was a great indulgence; and the prospect of its recurrence, I believe, alone kept me up through the year and made my durance tolerable. But when the week came around, did the glittering phantom of the distance keep touch with me? Or rather was it not a series of seven uneasy days spent in restless pursuit of pleasure, and a wearisome anxiety to find out how to make the most of them? Where was the quiet, where the promised rest? Before I had a taste of it, it was vanished. I was at the desk again, counting upon the fifty-one tedious weeks that must intervene before such another snatch would come. Still the prospect of its coming threw something of an illumination upon the darker side of my captivity. Without it, as I have said, I could scarcely have sustained my thralldom.

Independently of the rigors of attendance, I have ever been haunted with a sense (perhaps a mere caprice) of incapacity for business. This, during my latter years, had increased to such a degree that it was visible in all the lines of my countenance. My health and my good spirits flagged. I had perpetually a dread of some crisis to which I should be found unequal. Besides my daylight servitude, I served over again all night in my sleep and would awake with terrors of imaginary false entries, errors in my accounts and the like. I was fifty years of age, and no prospect of emancipation presented itself. I had grown to my desk, as it were; and the wood had entered into my soul.

My fellows in the office would sometimes rally me upon the trouble legible in my countenance; but I did not know that it had raised the suspicions of any of my employers, when, on the fifth of last month, a day ever to be remembered by me, L—, the junior partner in the firm, calling me to one side, directly taxed me with my bad looks, and frankly inquired the cause of them. So taxed, I honestly made confession of my infirmity, and added that I was afraid I should eventually be obliged to resign his service. He spoke some words, of course, to hearten me, and there the matter rested. A whole week I remained laboring under the impression that I had acted imprudently in my disclosure, that I had foolishly given a handle against myself and had been anticipating my own dismissal. A week passed in this manner, the most anxious one. I verily believe, in my whole life when, on the evening of the 12th of April, just as I was about quitting my desk to go home (it might be about eight o'clock) I received an awful summons to attend the presence of the whole assembled firm in the formidable back parlor. I thought, now my time is surely come, I have

done for myself, I am going to be told that they have no longer occasion for me. L-, I could see, smiled at the terror I was in, which was a little relief to me, when to my utter astonishment B-, the eldest partner, began a formal harangue to me on the length of my services, my very meritorious conduct during the whole of the time (the deuce, thought I, how did he find out that? I protest I never had the confidence to think as much). He went on to descant on the expediency of retiring at a certain time of life (how my heart panted!) and asking me a few questions as to the amount of my own property, of which I have a little, ended with a proposal, to which his three partners nodded a grave assent that I should accept from the house which I had served so well a pension for life to the amount of twothirds of my accustomed salary—a magnificent offer! I do not know what I answered between surprise and gratitude, but it was understood that I accepted their proposal, and I was told that I was free from that hour to leave their service. I stammered out a bow, and at just ten minutes after eight I went home-forever. This noble benefit (gratitude forbids me to conceal their names) I owe to the kindness of the most munificent firm in the world—the house of Boldero, Merryweather, Bosanquet and Lacy:

Esto perpetua! *

For the first day or two I felt stunned, overwhelmed. I could only apprehend my felicity; I was too confused to taste it sincerely. I wandered about, thinking I was happy and knowing that I was not. I was in the condition of a prisoner in the old Bastile, suddenly let loose after a forty years' confinement. I could scarce trust myself with myself. It was like passing out of Time into Eternity-for it is a sort of Eternity for a man to have his Time all to himself. It seemed to me that I had more time on my hands than I could ever manage. From a poor man, poor in Time, I was suddenly lifted up into a vast revenue; I could see no end of my possessions; I wanted some steward or judicious bailiff to manage my estates in Time for me. And here let me caution persons grown old in active business, not lightly, nor without weighing their own resources, to forego their customary employment all at once, for there may be danger in it. I feel it by myself, but I know that my resources are sufficient; and now that those first giddy raptures have subsided, I have a quiet home-feeling of the blessedness of my condition. I am in no hurry. Having all holidays, I am as though

^{*} May it live forever!

I had none. If Time hung heavy upon me, I could walk it away; but I do not walk all day long, as I used to do in those old transient holidays, thirty miles a day, to make the most of them. If Time were troublesome, I could read it away; but I do not read in that violent measure with which, having no Time in my own but candlelight Time, I used to weary out my head and eyesight in bygone winters. I walk, read or scribble (as now), just when the fit seizes me. I no longer hunt after pleasure; I let it come to me. I am like the man

that's born, and has his years come to him, In some green desert.

"Years!" you will say, "what is this superannuated simpleton calculating upon? He has already told us he is past fifty."

I have indeed lived nominally fifty years, but deduct out of them the hours which I have lived to other people and not to myself, and you will find me still a young fellow. For that is the only true Time which a man can properly call his own, that which he has all to himself; the rest, though in some sense he may be said to live it, is other people's Time, not his. The remnant of my poor days, long or short, is at least multiplied for me threefold. My ten next years, if I stretch so far, will be as long as any preceding thirty. 'Tis a fair rule-of-three sum.

Among the strange fantasies which beset me at the commencement of my freedom, and of which all traces are not yet gone, one was that a vast tract of time had intervened since I quitted the counting house. I could not conceive of it as an affair of yesterday. The partners and the clerks with whom I had for so many years and for so many hours in each day of the year been closely associated—being suddenly removed from them—they seemed as dead to me. There is a fine passage, which may serve to illustrate this fancy, in a tragedy by Sir Robert Howard, speaking of a friend's death:

'Twas but just now he went away; I have not since had time to shed a tear; And yet the distance does the same appear As if he had been a thousand years from me. Time takes no measure in Eternity.

To dissipate this awkward feeling, I have been fain to go among them once or twice since; to visit my old desk-fellows, my co-brethren of the quill, that I had left below in the state militant. Not all the kindness with which they received me could quite restore to me that pleasant familiarity which I had heretofore enjoyed among them. We

cracked some of our old jokes, but methought they went off but faintly. My old desk, the peg where I hung my hat were appropriated to another. I knew it must be, but I could not take it kindly. D——I take me, if I did not feel some remorse—beast, if I had not—at quitting my old compeers, the faithful partners of my toils for six-and-thirty years that smoothed for me with their jokes and conundrums the ruggedness of my professional road. Had it been so rugged then, after all? or was I a coward simply? Well, it is too late to repent; and I also know that these suggestions are a common fallacy of the mind on such occasions. But my heart smote me. I had violently broken the bands between us. It was at least not courteous. I shall be some time before I get quite reconciled to the separation. Farewell, old cronies, yet not for long, for again and again I will come among ye, if I shall have your leave. Farewell, Ch——, dry, sarcastic and friendly! Do——, mild, slow to move and gentlemanly! Pl——, officious to do and to volunteer good services! And thou, thou dreary pile, fit mansion for a Gresham or a Whittington of old, stately house of Merchants, with thy labyrinthine passages and light-excluding, pent-up offices, where candles for one half the year supplied the place of the sun's light; unhealthy contributor to my weal, stern fosterer of my living, farewell! In thee remain, and not in the obscure collection of some wandering bookseller, my "works"! There let them rest, as I do from my labors, piled on thy massy shelves, more manuscripts in folio than ever Aquinas left, and full as useful! My mantle I bequeath among ye.

A fortnight has passed since the date of my first communication. At that period I was approaching tranquillity, but had not reached it. I boasted of a calm indeed, but it was comparative only. Something of the first flutter was left; an unsettling sense of novelty; the dazzle to weak eyes of unaccustomed light. I missed my old chains, forsooth, as if they had been some necessary part of my apparel. I was a poor Carthusian, from strict cellular discipline suddenly by some revolution returned upon the world. I am now as if I had never been other than my own master. It is natural to me to go where I please, to do what I please. I find myself at eleven o'clock in the day in Bond Street, and it seems to me that I have been sauntering there at that very hour for years past. I digress into Soho to explore a bookstall. Methinks I have been thirty years a collector. There is nothing strange nor new in it. I find myself before a fine picture in the morning. Was it ever otherwise? What is become of Fish Street Hill? Where is Fenchurch Street? Stones of old Mincing Lane, which I have worn with my daily pilgrimage for

Essays of Elia

six-and-thirty years, to the footsteps of what toilworn clerk are your everlasting flints now vocal? I indent the gayer flags of Pall Mall. It is 'Change time, and I am strangely among the Elgin marbles.

It was no hyperbole when I ventured to compare the change in my condition to a passing into another world. Time stands still in a manner to me. I have lost all distinction of season. I do not know the day of the week or of the month. Each day used to be individually felt by me in its reference to the foreign post days; in its distance from, or propinquity to, the next Sunday. I had my Wednesday feelings, my Saturday nights' sensations. The genius of each day was upon me distinctly during the whole of it, affecting my appetite, spirits, etc. The phantom of the next day, with the dreary five to follow, sat as a load upon my poor Sabbath recreations. What charm has washed that Ethiop white? What is gone of Black Monday? All days are the same. Sunday itself—that unfortunate failure of a holiday, as it too often proved, what with my sense of its fugitiveness and overcare to get the greatest quantity of pleasure out of it—is melted down into a weekday. I can spare to go to church now, without grudging the huge cantle which it used to seem to cut out of the holiday. I have Time for everything. I can visit a sick friend. I can interrupt the man of much occupation when he is busiest. I can insult over him with an invitation to take a day's pleasure with me to Windsor this fine May morning. It is Lucretian pleasure to behold the poor drudges whom I have left behind in the world, carking and caring; like horses in a mill, drudging on in the same eternal round—and what is it all for? A man can never have too much Time to himself, nor too little to do. Had I a little son, I would christen him Nothing-to-do; he should do nothing. Man, I verily believe, is out of his element as long as he is operative. I am altogether for the life contemplative. Will no kindly earthquake come and swallow up those accursed cotton mills? Take me that lumber of a desk there, and bowl it down

As low as to the fiends.

I am not longer * * * * *, clerk to the Firm of, etc. I am Retired Leisure. I am to be met with in trim gardens. I am already come to be known by my vacant face and careless gesture, perambulating at no fixed pace, nor with any settled purpose. I walk about, not to and from. They tell me a certain dignified air, that has been buried so long with my other good parts, has begun to shoot forth in my person. I grow into gentility perceptibly. When I take up a newspaper, it is to

read the state of the opera. Opus operatum est.* I have done all that I came into this world to do. I have worked taskwork, and have the rest of the day to myself.

OLD CHINA

I HAVE AN ALMOST FEMININE PARTIALITY for old china. When I go to see any great house, I inquire for the china closet and next for the picture gallery. I cannot defend the order of preference, but by saying that we have all some taste or other of too ancient a date to admit of our remembering distinctly that it was an acquired one. I can call to mind the first play and the first exhibition that I was taken to; but I am not conscious of a time when china jars and saucers were introduced into my imagination.

I had no repugnance then—why should I now have?—to those little, lawless, azure-tinctured grotesques that, under the notion of men and women, float about, uncircumscribed by any element, in that world before perspective—a china teacup.

I like to see my old friends, whom distance cannot diminish, figuring up in the air (so they appear to our optics), yet on *terra firma* still—for so we must in courtesy interpret that speck of deeper blue which the decorous artist, to prevent absurdity, had made to spring up beneath their sandals.

I love the men with women's faces and the women, if possible, with still more womanish expressions.

Here is a young and courtly Mandarin handing tea to a lady from a salver—two miles off. See how distance seems to set off respect! And here the same lady or another—for likeness is identity on teacups—is stepping into a little fairy boat moored on the hither side of this calm garden river, with a dainty mincing foot, which in a right angle of incidence (as angles go in our world) must infallibly land her in the midst of a flowery mead—a furlong off on the other side of the same strange stream!

Farther on—if far or near can be predicated of their world—see horses, trees, pagodas dancing the hays.

Here—a cow and rabbit couchant and coextensive—so objects show, seen through the lucid atmosphere of fine Cathay.

I was pointing out to my cousin last evening over our Hyson (which * The work is completed.

we are old-fashioned enough to drink unmixed still of an afternoon) some old blue china (a recent purchase) which we were now for the first time using; and could not help remarking how favorable circumstances had been to us of late years that we could afford to please the eye sometimes with trifles of this sort—when a passing sentiment seemed to overshade the brows of my companion. I am quick at detecting these summer clouds in Bridget.

"I wish the good old times would come again," she said, "when we were not quite so rich. I do not mean that I want to be poor; but there was a middle state," so she was pleased to ramble on, "in which I am sure we were a great deal happier. A purchase is but a purchase, now that you have money enough and to spare. Formerly it used to be a triumph. When we coveted a cheap luxury (and O! how much ado I had to get you to consent in those times!), we were used to have a debate two or three days before, and to weigh the for and against, and think what we might spare it out of, and what saving we could hit upon that should be an equivalent. A thing was worth buying then when we felt the money that we paid for it.

"Do you remember the brown suit which you made to hang upon you till all your friends cried shame upon you, it grew so threadbare—and all because of that folio Beaumont and Fletcher which you dragged home late at night from Barker's in Covent Garden? Do you remember how we eyed it for weeks before we could make up our minds to the purchase, and had not come to a determination till it was near ten o'clock of the Saturday night when you set off from Islington, fearing you should be too late; and when the old bookseller with some grumbling opened his shop, and by the twinkling taper (for he was setting bedward) lighted out the relic from his dusty treasures; and when you lugged it home, wishing it were twice as cumbersome; and when you presented it to me; and when we were exploring the perfectness of it (collating, you called it); and while I was repairing some of the loose leaves with paste, which your impatience would not suffer to be left till daybreak-was there no pleasure in being a poor man? Or can those neat black clothes which you wear now and are so careful to keep brushed, since we have become rich and finical, give you half the honest vanity with which you flaunted it about in that overworn suit, your old corbeau, for four or five weeks longer than you should have done, to pacify your conscience for the mighty sum of fifteen—or sixteen shillings, was it? A great affair we thought it then-which you had lavished on the old folio. Now you can afford to buy any book

that pleases you, but I do not see that you ever bring me home any nice old purchases now.

"When you came home with twenty apologies for laying out a less number of shillings upon that print after Leonardo, which we christened the 'Lady Blanch'; when you looked at the purchase and thought of the money—and thought of the money and looked again at the picture—was there no pleasure in being a poor man? Now you have nothing to do but to walk into Colnaghi's and buy a wilderness of Leonardos. Yet do you?

"Then, do you remember our pleasant walks to Enfield and Potter's Bar and Waltham, when we had a holiday—holidays and all other fun are gone, now we are rich; and the little handbasket in which I used to deposit our day's fare of savory cold lamb and salad; and how you would pry about at noontide for some decent house where we might go in and produce our store—only paying for the ale that you must call for; and speculate upon the looks of the landlady, and whether she was likely to allow us a tablecloth; and wish for such another honest hostess as Izaak Walton has described many a one on the pleasant banks of the Lea, when he went fishing; and sometimes they would prove obliging enough, and sometimes they would look grudgingly upon us, but we had cheerful looks still for one another and would eat our plain food savorily, scarcely grudging Piscator his Trout Hall? Now when we go out a day's pleasuring, which is seldom, moreover, we ride part of the way and go into a fine inn and order the best of dinners, never debating the expense which, after all, never has half the relish of those chance country snaps when we were at the mercy of uncertain usage and a precarious welcome.

"You are too proud to see a play anywhere now but in the pit. Do you remember where it was we used to sit when we saw the Battle of Hexham and the Surrender of Calais, and Bannister and Mrs. Bland in the Children in the Wood—when we squeezed out our shillings apiece to sit three or four times in a season in the one-shilling gallery, where you felt all the time that you ought not to have brought me and more strongly I felt obligation to you for having brought me, and the pleasure was the better for a little shame; and when the curtain drew up, what cared we for our place in the house, or what mattered it where we were sitting when our thoughts were with Rosalind in Arden, or with Viola at the court of Illyria. You used to say that the Gallery was the best place of all for enjoying a play socially, that the relish of such exhibitions must be in proportion to the infrequency of going,

that the company we met there, not being in general readers of plays, were obliged to attend the more, and did attend, to what was going on on the stage because a word lost would have been a chasm, which it was impossible for them to fill up. With such reflections we consoled our pride then, and I appeal to you whether, as a woman, I met generally with less attention and accommodation than I have done since in more expensive situations in the house? The getting in indeed and the crowding up those inconvenient staircases was bad enough, but there was still a law of civility to woman recognized to quite as great an extent as we ever found in the other passages; and how a little difficulty overcome heightened the snug seat and the play, afterward! Now we can only pay our money and walk in. You cannot see, you say, in the galleries now. I am sure we saw, and heard too, well enough then—but sight and all, I think, is gone with our poverty.

"There was pleasure in eating strawberries before they became quite common, in the first dish of peas while they were yet dear; to have them for a nice supper, a treat. What treat can we have now? If we were to treat ourselves now—that is, to have dainties a little above our means, it would be selfish and wicked. It is the very little more that we allow ourselves beyond what the actual poor can get at that makes what I call a treat—when two people living together, as we have done, now and then indulge themselves in a cheap luxury which both like; while each apologizes and is willing to take both halves of the blame to his single share. I see no harm in people making much of themselves in that sense of the word. It may give them a hint how to make much of others. But now—what I mean by the word—we never do make much of ourselves. None but the poor can do it. I do not mean the veriest poor of all, but persons as we were, just above poverty.

"I know what you were going to say, that it is mighty pleasant at the end of the year to make all meet—and much ado we used to have every thirty-first night of December to account for our exceedings; many a long face did you make over your puzzled accounts, and in contriving to make it out how we had spent so much or that we had not spent so much or that it was impossible we should spend so much next year; and still we found our slender capital decreasing; but then, between ways and projects and compromises of one sort or another and talk of curtailing this charge and doing without that for the future, and the hope that youth brings and laughing spirits (in which you were never poor till now), we pocketed up our loss, and in conclusion,

with 'lusty brimmers' (as you used to quote it out of hearty cheerful Mr. Cotton, as you called him), we used to welcome in 'the coming guest.' Now we have no reckoning at all at the end of the old year—no flattering promises about the new year doing better for us."

Bridget is so sparing of her speech on most occasions that when she gets into a rhetorical vein, I am careful how I interrupt it. I could not help, however, smiling at the phantom of wealth which her dear imagination had conjured up out of a clear income of poor ---- hundred pounds a year. "It is true we were happier when we were poor but we were also younger, my cousin. I am afraid we must put up with the excess, for if we were to shake the superflux into the sea, we should not much mend ourselves. That we had much to struggle with as we grew up together, we have reason to be most thankful. It strengthened and knit our compact closer. We could never have been what we have been to each other if we had always had the sufficiency which you now complain of. The resisting power—those natural dilations of the youthful spirit which circumstances cannot straiten—with us are long since passed away. Competence to age is supplementary youth, a sorry supplement indeed, but I fear the best that is to be had. We must ride where we formerly walked, live better and lie softer—and shall be wise to do so-than we had means to do in those good old days you speak of. Yet could those days return, could you and I once more walk our thirty miles a day, could Bannister and Mrs. Bland again be young and you and I be young to see them, could the good old oneshilling gallery days return—they are dreams, my cousin, now—but could you and I at this moment, instead of this quiet argument by our well-carpeted fireside, sitting on this luxurious sofa-be once more struggling up those inconvenient staircases, pushed about and squeezed and elbowed by the poorest rabble of poor gallery scramblers, could I once more hear those anxious shrieks of yours and the delicious 'Thank God, we are safe,' which always followed when the topmost stair, conquered, let in the first light of the whole cheerful theater down beneath us, I know not the fathom line that ever touched a descent so deep as I would be willing to bury more wealth in than Croesus had, or the great Jew R--- is supposed to have, to purchase it. And now do just look at that merry little Chinese waiter holding an umbrella, big enough for a bed-tester, over the head of that pretty insipid half-Madonna-ish chit of a lady in that very blue summerhouse."

POPULAR FALLACIES

That a Bully Is always a Coward

THIS AXIOM CONTAINS A PRINCIPLE of compensation which disposes I us to admit the truth of it. But there is no safe trusting to dictionaries and definitions. We should more willingly fall in with this popular language if we did not find brutality sometimes awkwardly coupled with valor in the same vocabulary. The comic writers, with their poetical justice, have contributed not a little to mislead us upon this point. To see a hectoring fellow exposed and beaten upon the stage has something in it wonderfully diverting. Some people's share of animal spirits is notoriously low and defective. It has not strength to raise a vapor, or furnish out the wind of a tolerable bluster. These love to be told that huffing is no part of valor. The truest courage with them is that which is the least noisy and obtrusive. But confront one of these silent heroes with the swaggerer of real life, and his confidence in the theory quickly vanishes. Pretensions do not uniformly bespeak nonperformance. A modest, inoffensive deportment does not necessarily imply valor; neither does the absence of it justify us in denying that quality.

Even the poets—upon whom this equitable distribution of qualities should be most binding—have thought it agreeable to nature to depart from the rule upon occasion. Harapha, in the Agonistes, is indeed a bully upon the received notions. Milton has made him at once a blusterer, a giant and a dastard. But Almanzor, in Dryden, talks of driving armies singly before him—and does it. Tom Brown had a shrewder insight into this kind of character than either of his predecessors. He divides the palm more equably and allows his hero a sort of dimidiate pre-eminence: "Bully Dawson kicked by half the town, and half the town kicked by Bully Dawson." This was true distributive justice.

That enough Is as Good as a Feast

Not a man, woman or child in ten miles around Guildhall who really believes this saying. The inventor of it did not believe it himself. It was made in revenge by somebody, who was disappointed of a regale. It is a vile cold-scrag-of-mutton sophism, a lie palmed upon

the palate which knows better things. If nothing else could be said for a feast, this is sufficient, that from the superflux there is usually something left for the next day. Morally interpreted, it belongs to a class of proverbs which have a tendency to make us undervalue *money*. Of this cast are those notable observations that money is not health; riches cannot purchase everything; the metaphor which makes gold to be mere muck, with the morality which traces fine clothing to the sheep's back and denounces pearl as the unhandsome excretion of an oyster. Hence too the phrase which imputes dirt to acres—a sophistry so barefaced that even the literal sense of it is true only in a wet season. This, and abundance of similar sage saws assuming to inculcate *content*, we verily believe to have been the invention of some cunning borrower who had designs upon the purse of his wealthier neighbor, which he could only hope to carry by force of these verbal jugglings.

Translate any one of these sayings out of the artful metonymy which envelops it, and the trick is apparent. Goodly legs and shoulders of mutton, exhilarating cordials, books, pictures, the opportunities of seeing foreign countries, independence, heart's ease, a man's own time to himself, are not *muck*—however we may be pleased to scandalize with that appellation the faithful metal that provides them for us.

That Handsome Is That Handsome Does

Those who use this proverb can never have seen Mrs. Conrady.

The soul, if we may believe Plotinus, is a ray from the celestial beauty. As she partakes more or less of this heavenly light, she informs, with corresponding characters, the fleshly tenement which she chooses, and frames to herself a suitable mansion.

All which only proves that the soul of Mrs. Conrady, in her preexistent state, was no great judge of architecture.

To the same effect, in a "Hymn in Honor of Beauty," divine Spenser platonizing, sings:

--Every spirit as it is more pure, And hath in it the more of heavenly light, So it the fairer body doth procure To habit in, and it more fairly dight With cheerful grace and amiable sight. For of the soul the body form doth take: For soul is form and doth the body make.

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But Spenser, it is clear, never saw Mrs. Conrady.

These poets, we find, are no safe guides in philosophy; for here, in his very next stanza but one, is a saving clause, which throws us all out again and leaves us as much to seek as ever:

Yet oft it falls, that many a gentle mind Dwells in deformed tabernacle drown'd, Either by chance, against the course of kind, Or through unaptness in the substance found, Which it assumed of some stubborn ground, That will not yield unto her form's direction, But is performed with some foul imperfection.

From which it would follow that Spenser had seen somebody like Mrs. Conrady.

The spirit of this good lady—her previous anima—must have stumbled upon one of these untoward tabernacles which he speaks of. A more rebellious commodity of clay for a ground, as the poet calls it, no gentle mind—and sure hers is one of the gentlest—ever had to deal with.

Pondering upon her inexplicable visage—inexplicable, we mean, but by this modification of the theory—we have come to a conclusion that, if one must be plain, it is better to be plain all over than amid a tolerable residue of features to hang out one that shall be exceptionable. No one can say of Mrs. Conrady's countenance that it would be better if she had but a nose. It is impossible to pull her to pieces in this manner. We have seen the most malicious beauties of her own sex baffled in the attempt at a selection. The tout ensemble * defies particularizing. It is too complete—too consistent, as we may say—to admit of these invidious reservations. It is not as if some Apelles had picked out here a lip and there a chin out of the collected ugliness of Greece to frame a model by. It is a symmetrical whole.

We challenge the minutest connoisseur to cavil at any part or parcel of the countenance in question, to say that this or that is improperly placed. We are convinced that true ugliness, no less than is affirmed of true beauty, is the result of harmony. Like that too, it reigns without a competitor. No one ever saw Mrs. Conrady without pronouncing her to be the plainest woman that he ever met with in the course of his life. The first time that you are indulged with a sight of her face is an era in your existence ever after. You are glad to have seen it—like

^{*} General effect

Stonehenge. No one can pretend to forget it. No one ever apologized to her for meeting her in the street on such a day and not knowing her: the pretext would be too bare. Nobody can mistake her for another. Nobody can say of her, "I think I have seen that face somewhere, but I cannot call to mind where." You must remember that in such a parlor it first struck you—like a bust. You wondered where the owner of the house had picked it up. You wondered more when it began to move its lips—so mildly too! No one ever thought of asking her to sit for her picture. Lockets are for remembrance; and it would be clearly superfluous to hang an image at your heart which, once seen, can never be out of it.

It is not a mean face either; its entire originality precludes that. Neither is it of that order of plain faces which improve upon acquaintance. Some very good but ordinary people, by an unwearied perseverance in good offices, put a cheat upon our eyes, juggle our senses out of their natural impressions and set us upon discovering good indications in a countenance which at first sight promised nothing less. We detect gentleness, which had escaped us, lurking about an under lip. But when Mrs. Conrady has done you a service, her face remains the same; when she has done you a thousand, and you know that she is ready to double the number, still it is that individual face.

Neither can you say of it that it would be a good face if it were not marked by the smallpox—a compliment which is always more admissive than excusatory—for either Mrs. Conrady never had the smallpox or, as we say, took it kindly. No, it stands upon its own merits fairly. There it is. It is her mark, her token; that which she is known by.

That Home Is Home though It Is Never so Homely

Homes there are, we are sure, that are no homes; the home of the very poor man and another which we shall speak of presently. Crowded places of cheap entertainment and the benches of alehouses, if they could speak, might bear mournful testimony to the first. To them the very poor man resorts for an image of the home which he cannot find at home. For a starved grate and a scanty firing that is not enough to keep alive the natural heat in the fingers of so many shivering children with their mother, he finds in the depths of winter always a blazing hearth and a hob to warm his pittance of beer by. Instead of the clamors of a wife, made gaunt by famishing, he meets with a

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cheerful attendance beyond the merits of the trifle which he can afford to spend.

He has companions which his home denies him, for the very poor man has no visitors. He can look into the goings on of the world and speak a little of politics. At home there are no politics stirring, but the domestic. All interests, real or imaginary, all topics that should expand the mind of man and connect him to a sympathy with general existence are crushed in the absorbing consideration of food to be obtained for the family. Beyond the price of bread, news is senseless and impertinent. At home there is no larder. Here there is at least a show of plenty; and while he cooks his lean scrap of butcher's meat before the common bars or munches his humbler cold viands, his relishing bread and cheese with an onion in a corner, where no one reflects upon his poverty, he has a sight of the substantial joint providing for the landlord and his family. He takes an interest in the dressing of it; and while he assists in removing the trivet from the fire, he feels that there is such a thing as beef and cabbage, which he was beginning to forget at home.

All this while he deserts his wife and children. But what wife and what children? Prosperous men, who object to this desertion, imagine to themselves some clean contented family like that which they go home to. But look at the countenance of the poor wives who follow and persecute their goodman to the door of the public house, which he is about to enter, when something like shame would restrain him if stronger misery did not induce him to pass the threshold. That face, ground by want, in which every cheerful, every conversable lineament has been long effaced by misery—is that a face to stay at home with? Is it more a woman, or a wild cat? Alas! It is the face of the wife of his youth, that once smiled upon him. It can smile no longer. What comforts can it share? What burdens can it lighten? Oh, 'tis a fine thing to talk of the humble meal shared together! But what if there be no bread in the cupboard? The innocent prattle of his children takes out the sting of a man's poverty. But the children of the very poor do not prattle. It is none of the least frightful features in that condition that there is no childishness in its dwellings. Poor people, said a sensible old nurse to us once, do not bring up their children; they drag them up.

The little careless darling of the wealthier nursery, in their hovel is transformed betimes into a premature reflecting person. No one has time to dandle it; no one thinks it worth while to coax it, to soothe it,

to toss it up and down, to humor it. There is none to kiss away its tears. If it cries, it can only be beaten. It has been prettily said that "a babe is fed with milk and praise." But the aliment of this poor babe was thin, unnourishing; the return to its little baby tricks and efforts to engage attention, bitter ceaseless objurgation. It never had a toy or knew what a coral meant. It grew up without the lullaby of nurses; it was a stranger to the patient fondle, the hushing caress, the attracting novelty, the costlier plaything or the cheaper offhand contrivance to divert the child; the prattled nonsense (best sense to it), the wise impertinences, the wholesome lies, the apt story interposed that puts a stop to present sufferings and awakens the passions of young wonder. It was never sung to; no one ever told to it a tale of the nursery. It was dragged up, to live or to die as it happened. It had no young dreams. It broke at once into the iron realities of life.

A child exists not for the very poor as any object of dalliance; it is only another mouth to be fed, a pair of little hands to be betimes inured to labor. It is the rival, till it can be the co-operator, for food with the parent. It is never his mirth, his diversion, his solace; it never makes him young again, with recalling his young times. The children of the very poor have no young times. It makes the very heart bleed to overhear the casual street talk between a poor woman and her little girl, a woman of the better sort of poor, in a condition rather above the squalid beings which we have been contemplating. It is not of toys, of nursery books, of summer holidays (fitting that age), of the promised sight or play, of praised sufficiency at school. It is of mangling and clear-starching, of the price of coals or of potatoes. The questions of the child, that should be the very outpourings of curiosity in idleness, are marked with forecast and melancholy providence. It has come to be a woman—before it was a child. It has learned to go to market; it chaffers, it haggles, it envies, it murmurs; it is knowing, acute, sharpened; it never prattles. Had we not reason to say that the home of the very poor is no home?

There is yet another home, which we are constrained to deny to be one. It has a larder, which the home of the poor man wants; it has fireside conveniences, of which the poor dream not. But with all this, it is no home. It is—the house of a man that is infested with many visitors. May we be branded for the veriest churl if we deny our heart to the many noble-hearted friends that at times exchange their dwelling for our poor roof! It is not of guests that we complain, but of endless, purposeless visitants; droppers-in, as they are called. We some-

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times wonder from what sky they fall. It is the very error of the position of our lodging; its horoscopy was ill calculated, being just situate in a medium—a plaguy suburban midspace—fitted to catch idlers from town or country.

We are older than we were, and age is easily put out of its way. We have fewer sands in our glass to reckon upon, and we cannot brook to see them drop in endlessly succeeding impertinences. At our time of life, to be alone sometimes is as needful as sleep. It is the refreshing sleep of the day. The growing infirmities of age manifest themselves in nothing more strongly, than in an inveterate dislike of interruption. The thing which we are doing, we wish to be permitted to do. We have neither much knowledge nor devices; but there are fewer in the place to which we hasten. We are not willingly put out of our way, even at a game of ninepins. While youth was, we had vast reversions in time future; we are reduced to a present pittance and obliged to economize in that article. We bleed away our moments now as hard as our ducats. We cannot bear to have our thin wardrobe eaten and fretted into by moths. We are willing to barter our good time with a friend who gives us in exchange his own. Herein is the distinction between the genuine guest and the visitant. This latter takes your good time, and gives you his bad in exchange.

The guest is domestic to you as your good cat or household bird; the visitant is your fly that flaps in at your window and out again, leaving nothing but a sense of disturbance and victuals spoiled. The interior functions of life begin to move heavily. We cannot concoct our food with interruptions. Our chief meal, to be nutritive, must be solitary. With difficulty we can eat before a guest; and never understood what the relish of public feasting meant. Meats have no sapor nor digestion fair play in a crowd. The unexpected coming in of a visitant stops the machine. There is a punctual generation who time their calls to the precise commencement of your dining hour-not to eat-but to see you eat. Our knife and fork drop instinctively, and we feel that we have swallowed our latest morsel. Others again show their genius, as we have said, in knocking the moment you have just sat down to a book. They have a peculiar compassionate sneer, with which they "hope that they do not interrupt your studies." Though they flutter off the next moment to carry their impertinences to the nearest student that they can call their friend, the tone of the book is spoiled; we shut the leaves, and with Dante's lovers, read no more that day.*

^{*} Paolo and Francesca, Divine Comedy: Inferno, Canto V

It were well if the effect of intrusion were simply co-extensive with its presence, but it mars all the good hours afterward. These scratches in appearance leave an orifice that closes not hastily. "It is a prostitution of the bravery of friendship," says worthy Bishop Taylor, "to spend it upon impertinent people, who are, it may be, loads to their families, but can never ease my loads." This is the secret of their gaddings, their visits and morning calls. They too have homes, which are—no homes.

That You Must Love Me and Love My Dog

"Good sir, or madam—as it may be—we most willingly embrace the offer of your friendship. We have long known your excellent qualities. We have wished to have you nearer to us, to hold you within the very innermost fold of our heart. We can have no reserve toward a person of your open and noble nature. The frankness of your humor suits us exactly. We have been long looking for such a friend. Quick, let us disburden our troubles into each other's bosom, let us make our single joys shine by reduplication. But yap, yap, yap! What is this confounded cur? He has fastened his tooth, which is none of the bluntest, just in the fleshy part of my leg."

"It is my dog, sir. You must love him for my sake. Here, Test, Test, Test!"

"But he has bitten me."

"Ay, that he is apt to do, till you are better acquainted with him. I have had him three years. He never bites me."

Yap, yap, yap! "He is at it again."

"Oh, sir, you must not kick him. He does not like to be kicked. I expect my dog to be treated with all the respect due to myself."

"But do you always take him out with you when you go friendship-hunting?"

"Invariably. 'Tis the sweetest, prettiest, best-conditioned animal. I call him my test—the touchstone by which to try a friend. No one can properly be said to love me who does not love him."

"Excuse us, dear sir—or madam, aforesaid—if upon further consideration we are obliged to decline the otherwise invaluable offer of your friendship. We do not like dogs."

"Mighty well, sir. You know the conditions. You may have worse offers. Come along, Test."

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The above dialogue is not so imaginary but that, in the intercourse of life, we have had frequent occasions of breaking off an agreeable intimacy by reason of these canine appendages. They do not always come in the shape of dogs; they sometimes wear the more plausible and human character of kinsfolk, near acquaintances, my friend's friend, his partner, his wife or his children. We could never yet form a friendship—not to speak of more delicate correspondence—however much to our taste, without the intervention of some third anomaly, some impertinent clog affixed to the relation: the understood dog in the proverb. The good things of life are not to be had singly, but come to us with a mixture, like a schoolboy's holiday with a task affixed to the tail of it. What a delightful companion is * * * *, if he did not always bring his tall cousin with him! He seems to grow with him like some of those double births which we remember to have read of with such wonder and delight in the old "Athenian Oracle," where Swift commenced author by writing Pindaric odes (what a beginning for him!) upon Sir William Temple. There is the picture of the brother with the little brother peeping out at his shoulder, a species of fraternity, which we have no name of kin close enough to comprehend. When * * * * comes, poking in his head and shoulder into your room as if to feel his entry, you think, surely you have now got him to yourself; what a three hours' chat we shall have! But ever in the haunch of him, and before his diffident body is well disclosed in your apartment, appears the haunting shadow of the cousin, overpeering his modest kinsman and sure to overlay the expected good talk with his insufferable procerity * of stature and uncorresponding dwarfishness of observation. Misfortunes seldom come alone.

'Tis hard when a blessing comes accompanied. Cannot we like Sempronia without sitting down to chess with her eternal brother or know Sulpicia without knowing all the round of her cardplaying relations? Must my friend's brethren of necessity be mine also? Must we be hand and glove with Dick Selby the parson or Jack Selby the calico printer because W. S., who is neither, but a ripe wit and a critic, has the misfortune to claim a common parentage with them? Let him lay down his brothers; and 'tis odds that we will cast him in a pair of ours (we have a superflux) to balance the concession. Let F. H. lay down his garrulous uncle and Honorius dismiss his vapid wife and superfluous establishment of six boys—things between boy and manhood (too ripe for play, too raw for conversation) that come in, impudently star-

ing their father's old friend out of countenance and will neither aid nor let alone the conference, that we may once more meet upon equal terms as we were wont to do in the disengaged state of bachelorhood.

It is well if your friend or mistress be content with these canicular probations. Few young ladies but in this sense keep a dog. But while Rutilia hounds at you her tiger aunt or Ruspina expects you to cherish and fondle her viper sister, whom she has preposterously taken into her bosom, to try stinging conclusions upon your constancy, they must not complain if the house be rather thin of suitors. Scylla must have broken off many excellent matches in her time if she insisted upon all who loved her, loving her dogs also.

An excellent story to this moral is told of Merry, of Della Cruscan † memory. In tender youth he loved and courted a modest appanage to the Opera-in truth a dancer-who had won him by the artless contrast between her manners and situation. She seemed to him a native violet that had been transplanted by some rude accident into that exotic and artificial hotbed. Nor, in truth, was she less genuine and sincere than she appeared to him. He wooed and won this flower. Only for appearance sake, and for due honor to the bride's relations, she craved that she might have the attendance of her friends and kindred at the approaching solemnity. The request was too amiable not to be conceded, and in this solicitude for conciliating the good will of mere relations, he found a presage of her superior attentions to himself, when the golden shaft should have "killed the flock of all affections else." The morning came, and at the Star and Garter, Richmond, the place appointed for the breakfasting, accompanied with one English friend, he impatiently awaited what reinforcements the bride should bring to grace the ceremony.

A rich muster she had made. They came in six coaches—the whole corps du ballet, French, Italian, men and women. Monsieur de B., the famous pirouetter of the day, led his fair spouse, but craggy, from the banks of the Seine. The Prima Donna had sent her excuse. But the first and second Buffa were there; and Signor Sc— and Signora Ch—and Madame V—, with a countless cavalcade besides of chorusers, figurantes! at the sight of whom Merry afterward declared that "then for the first time it struck him seriously that he was about to marry—a dancer."

But there was no help for it. Besides, it was her day; these were, in

[†] Robert Merry (1755-98), leader of the pretentious Della Crusca school of British poets in Florence

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fact, her friends and kinfolk. The assemblage, though whimsical, was all very natural. But when the bride, handing out of the last coach a still more extraordinary figure than the rest, presented to him as her father, the gentleman that was to give her away, no less a person than Signor Delpini himself (with a sort of pride, as much as to say, "See what I have brought to do us honor"!), the thought of so extraordinary a paternity quite overcame him; and slipping away under some pretense from the bride and her motley adherents, poor Merry took horse from the back yard to the nearest seacoast, from which, shipping himself to America, he shortly after consoled himself with a more congenial match in the person of Miss Brunton, relieved from his intended clown father and a bevy of painted buffas for bridesmaids.

That We Should Rise with the Lark

At what precise minute that little airy musician doffs his night gear, and prepares to tune up his unseasonable matins, we are not naturalists enough to determine. But for a mere human gentleman—who has no orchestra business to call him from his warm bed to such preposterous exercises—we take ten or half after ten (eleven, of course, during this Christmas solstice) to be the very earliest hour at which he can begin to think of abandoning his pillow. To think of it, we say; for to do it in earnest requires another half-hour's good consideration. Not but there are pretty sun-risings, as we are told, and such like gawds * abroad in the world, in summer time especially, some hours before what we have assigned, which a gentleman may see, as they say, only for getting up. But having been tempted once or twice in earlier life to assist at those ceremonies, we confess our curiosity abated. We are no longer ambitious of being the sun's courtiers to attend at his morning levees. We hold the good hours of the dawn too sacred to waste them upon such observances, which have in them, besides, something Pagan and Persic.

To say truth, we never anticipated our usual hour or got up with the sun (as 'tis called) to go a journey or upon a foolish whole day's pleasuring, but we suffered for it all the long hours after in listlessness and headaches, Nature herself sufficiently declaring her sense of our presumption in aspiring to regulate our frail waking courses by the measures of that celestial and sleepless traveler. We deny not that

^{*} Jewels

there is something sprightly and vigorous, at the outset especially, in these break-of-day excursions. It is flattering to get the start of a lazy world, to conquer death by proxy in his image. But the seeds of sleep and mortality are in us; and we pay usually, in strange qualms before night falls, the penalty of the unnatural inversion. Therefore, while the busy part of mankind are fast huddling on their clothes, are already up and about their occupations, content to have swallowed their sleep by wholesale, we choose to linger a-bed and digest our dreams. It is the very time to recombine the wandering images which night in a confused mass presented, to snatch them from forgetfulness, to shape and mold them.

Some people have no good of their dreams. Like fast feeders, they gulp them too grossly to taste them curiously. We love to chew the cud of a foregone vision: to collect the scattered rays of a brighter phantasm or act over again, with firmer nerves, the sadder nocturnal tragedies; to drag into daylight a struggling and half-vanishing night-mare; to handle and examine the terrors or the airy solaces. We have too much respect for these spiritual communications to let them go so lightly. We are not so stupid or so careless as that Imperial forgetter of his dreams, that we should need a seer to remind us of the form of them. They seem to us to have as much significance as our waking concerns or rather, to import us more nearly, as more nearly we approach by years to the shadowy world, whither we are hastening. We have shaken hands with the world's business; we have done with it; we have discharged ourselves of it. Why should we get up? we have neither suit to solicit nor affairs to manage. The drama has shut in upon us at the fourth act. We have nothing here to expect but in a short time a sickbed and a dismissal.

We delight to anticipate death by such shadows as night affords. We are already half acquainted with ghosts. We were never much in the world. Disappointment early struck a dark veil between us and its dazzling illusions. Our spirits, showed gray before our hairs. The mighty changes of the world already appear as but the vain stuff out of which dramas are composed. We have asked no more of life than what the mimic images in playhouses present us with. Even those types have waxed fainter. Our clock appears to have struck. We are SUPERANNUATED. In this dearth of mundane satisfaction, we contract politic alliances with shadows. It is good to have friends at court. The abstracted media of dreams seem no ill introduction to that spiritual presence, upon which, in no long time, we expect to be thrown. We

ESSAYS OF ELIA

are trying to know a little of the usages of that colony, to learn the language and the faces we shall meet with there, that we may be the less awkward at our first coming among them. We willingly call a phantom our fellow, as knowing we shall soon be of their dark companionship. Therefore we cherish dreams. We try to spell in them the alphabet of the invisible world and think we know already how it shall be with us. Those uncouth shapes which, while we clung to flesh and blood, affrighted us, have become familiar. We feel attenuated into their meager essences, and have given the hand of halfway approach to incorporeal being. We once thought life to be something; but it has unaccountably fallen from us before its time. Therefore we choose to dally with visions. The sun has no purposes of ours to light us to. Why should we get up?

That We Should Lie Down with the Lamb

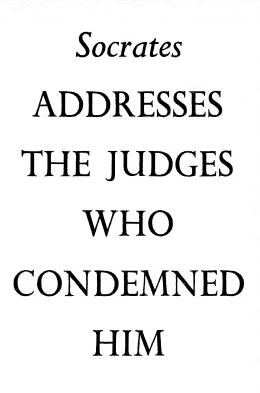
We could never quite understand the philosophy of this arrangement or the wisdom of our ancestors in sending us for instruction to these woolly bedfellows. A sheep, when it is dark, has nothing to do but to shut his silly eyes and sleep if he can. Man found out long sixes.* Hail, candlelight! without disparagement to sun and moon, the kindliest luminary of the three, if we may not rather style thee their radiant deputy, mild viceroy of the moon! We love to read, talk, sit silent, eat, drink, sleep by candlelight. They are everybody's sun and moon. This is our peculiar and household planet. Wanting it, what savage unsocial nights must our ancestors have spent, wintering in caves and unillumined fastnesses! They must have lain about and grumbled at one another in the dark. What repartees could have passed when you must have felt about for a smile and handled a neighbor's cheek to be sure that he understood it? This accounts for the seriousness of the elder poetry. It has a somber cast (try Hesiod or Ossian), derived from the tradition of those unlanterned nights. Jokes came in with candles. We wonder how they saw to pick up a pin, if they had any. How did they sup? What a melange of chance carving they must have made of it! Here one had got a leg of a goat, when he wanted a horse's shoulder. There another had dipped his scooped palm in a kid-skin of wild honey, when he meditated right mare's milk. There is neither good eating nor drinking alfresco. Who,

^{*} Tapers, sold six to the pound

even in these civilized times, has never experienced this, when at some economic table he has commenced dining after dusk and waited for the flavor till the lights came? The senses absolutely give and take reciprocally. Can you tell pork from veal in the dark or distinguish Sherris from pure Malaga? Take away the candle from the smoking man; by the glimmering of the left ashes, he knows that he is still smoking, but he knows it only by an inference; till the restored light, coming in aid of the olfactories, reveals to both senses the full aroma. Then how he redoubles his puffs! how he burnishes! There is absolutely no such thing as reading but by a candle. We have tried the affectation of a book at noonday in gardens and in sultry arbors; but it was labor thrown away. Those gay motes in the beam come about you, hovering and teasing like so many coquettes that will have you all to themselves and are jealous of your abstractions. By the midnight taper, the writer digests his meditations. By the same light we must approach to their perusal, if we would catch the flame, the odor. It is a mockery, all that is reported of the influential Phoebus. No true poem ever owed its birth to the sun's light. They are abstracted works:

Things that were born, when none but the still night, And his dumb candle, saw his pinching throes.

Marry, daylight—daylight might furnish the images, the crude material; but for the fine shapings, the true turning and filing (as mine author hath it), they must be content to hold their inspiration of the candle. The mild internal light, that reveals them like fires on the domestic hearth, goes out in the sunshine. Night and silence call out the starry fancies. Milton's "Morning Hymn in Paradise," we would hold a good wager, was penned at midnight; and Taylor's rich description of a sunrise smells decidedly of the taper. Even ourself, in these our humbler lucubrations, tune our best-measured cadences (Prose has her cadences) not unfrequently to the charm of the drowsier watchman, "blessing the doors" or the wild sweep of winds at midnight. Even now a loftier speculation than we have yet attempted courts our endeavors. We would indite something about the Solar System. Betty, bring the candles.





HOME COURSE APPRECIATION



N THE SPRING OR EARLY SUMMER of 399 B.C., five hundred Athenians sat in judgment of a seventy-year-old man. He had been charged with corrupting the youth of Athens by teaching them disrespect for the gods and state. The jury found him guilty and sentenced him to death. The accused was Socrates—a man who had spent his life searching for the truth.

Some years after the event Plato, whose own thinking had been largely molded by the teachings of the older man, wrote a dialogue called the *Apology* in which he recorded the three speeches Socrates had delivered during his trial. No one assumes that Plato has given us a verbatim report; but it is generally held that Plato, with his mastery of language and his supreme gift for drama, faithfully recorded the tone and reasoning that Socrates used in his own defense.

Plato's account holds up before us a human tragedy transformed by courage into a triumph. With a firmness and dignity born of a life dedicated to the search for truth, Socrates faced his accusers and preferred death to relinquishing the principles which had served as the foundation of his life. Rather than disgrace his life by shamelessly pleading for forgiveness, he died, and in doing so, raised himself to a new level of grandeur.

Socrates first warns his listeners that he is not a polished orator and that they must listen primarily for the truth or falsity of what he says, disregarding the manner in which he may present it. Then, true to the "socratic" method of investigation, which is concerned first with a penetrating examination of underlying circumstances, Socrates ignores the specific indictment with which he has been charged. He must

first reply, he feels, to another set of charges, charges of long standing which, though never voiced against him officially, may have led to the present accusations and may have prejudiced many of those who must now decide whether he is guilty or innocent.

Here Socrates refers to the misconceptions and slanders of certain playwrights (especially Aristophanes) who introduced in their plays a character called Socrates, a ridiculous figure who prattled a great deal of nonsense. What, Socrates asks, had given rise to these slanders? Socrates answered his own question by relating the story of the Delphic oracle, which had pronounced that there was no man wiser than Socrates. He himself, puzzled by this announcement, had gone about searching for a man wiser than himself. He had found "that those men considered most wise were the most foolish. Generals had not been able to define "courage"; politicians had not been able to explain "justice"; priests could not explain the meaning of "piety"; nor could artisans define "art." He had exposed their ignorance to the very men who were now sitting in judgment. Those whom he had exposed did not become angry at themselves for their ignorance, but at him for exposing them. And so they charged him with subversion.

When once he turned to the specific charges on which he had been brought to trial, Socrates had no difficulty in proving that the charges were both ambiguous and meaningless. He rested his case. He refused to plead for acquittal, because to him such a plea implied that he would be asking a favor of the judges. Justice is not to be dispensed as a gift; justice is the result of reason and the law.

Socrates was found guilty by a vote of 280 to 220. In accordance with Greek custom, he was allowed to propose his own sentence.

It is now generally agreed that the Athenians never really wanted Socrates' death, but sought only his public disgrace through apology. In this they misunderstood him. They had thought he would propose banishment and they would be rid of him. Instead he proposed only that they fine him. He could not honestly believe, he declared, that there was any reason that he should be punished; in fact, he felt he deserved the honors usually given to generals and heroes.

This bit of ironic impudence left his jury outraged. The death penalty was voted with an even greater majority than the vote of guilt.

Socrates then addressed a few last words to his judges. "I would rather die having spoken after my manner, than speak in your manner and live. . . . There are other ways of escaping death if a man is willing to say and do anything. The difficulty, my friends, is not to



". . . to you and to God I commit my cause. . . ."

avoid death, but to avoid unrighteousness."

Death, he reflects, is good. Death will permit him to make the journey that will bring him into the company of the heroes and wise men of bygone days. He will be able to continue his search for the truth without the annoyance of juries to hinder him.

Socrates' friends made plans to rescue him from prison, but he refused to participate. Whether the verdict was just or not, it was a verdict found by a legally constituted body; to escape from prison would be a criminal act, and Socrates refused to commit a crime.

At sunset, a month or so later, Socrates drank hemlock. He was not angry with his accusers or condemners: ". . . they have done me no harm, although they did not mean to do me any good; and for this I may gently blame them."



TOT MUCH TIME WILL BE GAINED, O Athenians, in return for the evil name which you will get from the detractors of the city, who will say that you killed Socrates, a wise man; for they will call me wise, even though I am not wise, when they want to reproach you. If you had waited a little while, your desire would have been fulfilled in the course of nature. For I am far advanced in years, as you may perceive, and not far from death. I am speaking now not to all of you, but only to those who have condemned me to death. And I have another thing to say to them. You think that I was convicted because I had no words of the sort which would have procured my acquittal-I mean, if I had thought fit to leave nothing undone or unsaid. Not so; the deficiency which led to my conviction was not of words-certainly not. But I had not the boldness or impudence or inclination to address you as you would have liked me to do, weeping and wailing and lamenting, and saying and doing many things which you have been accustomed to hear from others, and which, as I maintain, are unworthy of me. I thought at the time that I ought not to do anything common or mean when in danger; nor do I now repent of the style of my defense. I would rather die having spoken after my manner than speak in your manner and live.

For neither in war nor yet at law ought I or any man to use every way of escaping death. Often in battle there can be no doubt that if a man will throw away his arms and fall on his knees before his pursuers, he may escape death; and in other dangers there are other ways of

escaping death if a man is willing to say and do anything. The difficulty, my friends, is not to avoid death, but to avoid unrighteousness; for that runs faster than death. I am old and move slowly, and the slower runner has overtaken me; my accusers are keen and quick, and the faster runner, who is unrighteousness, has overtaken them. And now I depart hence condemned by you to suffer the penalty of death; they too go their ways condemned by the truth to suffer the penalty of villainy and wrong. I must abide by my award; let them abide by theirs. I suppose that these things may be regarded as fated, and I think that they are well.

And now, O men who have condemned me, I would fain prophesy to you; for I am about to die, and in the hour of death men are gifted with prophetic power. I prophesy to you who are my murderers that immediately after my departure punishment far heavier than you have inflicted on me will surely await you. Me you have killed because you wanted to escape the accuser and not give an account of your lives. But that will not be as you suppose; far otherwise. For I say that there will be more accusers of you than there are now, accusers whom hitherto I have restrained; and as they are younger, they will be more inconsiderate with you, and you will be more offended at them. If you think that by killing men you can prevent someone from censuring your evil lives, you are mistaken; that is not a way of escape which is either possible or honorable; the easiest and the noblest way is not to be disabling others, but to be improving yourselves. This is the prophecy which I utter before my departure to the judges who have condemned me.

Friends, who would have acquitted me, I would like also to talk with you about the thing which has come to pass, while the magistrates are busy, and before I go to the place at which I must die. Stay then a little, for we may as well talk with one another while there is time. You are my friends, and I should like to show you the meaning of this event which has happened to me. O my judges—for you I may truly call judges—I should like to tell you of a wonderful circumstance. Hitherto the divine faculty of which the internal oracle is the source has constantly been in the habit of opposing me even about trifles, if I was going to make a slip or error in any matter; and now, as you see, there has come upon me that which may be thought, and is generally believed to be, the last and worst evil. But the oracle made no sign of opposition, either when I was leaving my house in the morning or when I was on my way to the court or while I was speaking, at

Socrates Addresses the Judges

anything which I was going to say; and yet I have often been stopped in the middle of a speech; but now in nothing I either said or did touching the matter in hand has the oracle opposed me. What do I take to be the explanation of this silence? I will tell you. It is an intimation that what has happened to me is a good, and that those of us who think that death is an evil are in error. For the customary sign would surely have opposed me had I been going to evil and not to good.

Let us reflect in another way, and we shall see that there is great reason to hope that death is a good; for one of two things—either death is a state of nothingness and utter unconsciousness or, as men say, there is a change and migration of the soul from this world to another. Now if you suppose that there is no consciousness, but a sleep like the sleep of him who is undisturbed even by dreams, death will be an unspeakable gain. For if a person were to select the night in which his sleep was undisturbed even by dreams, and were to compare with this the other days and nights of his life, and then were to tell us how many days and nights he had passed in the course of his life better and more pleasantly than this one, I think that any man (1 will not say a private man, but even the great king) will not find many such days or nights, when compared with the others. Now if death be of such a nature, I say that to die is gain; for eternity is then only a single night.

But if death is the journey to another place, and there, as men say, all the dead abide, what good, O my friends and judges, can be greater than this? If indeed when the pilgrim arrives in the world below, he is delivered from the professors of justice in this world and finds the true judges who are said to give judgment there, Minos and Rhadamanthus and Aeacus and Triptolemus and other sons of God who were righteous in their own life, that pilgrimage will be worth making. What would not a man give if he might converse with Orpheus and Musaeus and Hesiod and Homer? Nay, if this be true, let me die again and again. I myself, too, shall have a wonderful interest in there meeting and conversing with Palamedes and Ajax, the son of Telamon, and any other ancient hero who has suffered death through an unjust judgment; and there will be no small pleasure, as I think, in comparing my own sufferings with theirs.

Above all, I shall then be able to continue my search into true and false knowledge; as in this world, so also in the next; and I shall find out who is wise, and who pretends to be wise and is not. What would not a man give, O judges, to be able to examine the leader of the great

Trojan expedition * or Odysseus or Sisyphus or numberless others, men and women too! What infinite delight would there be in conversing with them and asking them questions! In another world they do not put a man to death for asking questions; assuredly not. For besides being happier than we are, they will be immortal, if what is said is true.

Wherefore, O judges, be of good cheer about death, and know of a certainty that no evil can happen to a good man either in life or after death. He and his are not neglected by the gods; nor has my own approaching end happened by mere chance. But I see clearly that the time had arrived when it was better for me to die and be released from trouble; wherefore the oracle gave no sign. For which reason also, I am not angry with my condemners or with my accusers; they have done me no harm, although they did not mean to do me any good; and for this I may gently blame them.

Still I have a favor to ask of them. When my sons are grown up, I would ask you, O my friends, to punish them; and I would have you trouble them, as I have troubled you, if they seem to care about riches or anything more than about virtue; or if they pretend to be something when they are really nothing, then reprove them, as I have reproved you, for not caring about that for which they ought to care, and thinking that they are something when they are really nothing. And if you do this, both I and my sons will have received justice at your hands.

The hour of departure has arrived, and we go our ways—I to die and you to live. Which is better only God knows.

^{*} Agamemnon

THE RUBAIYAT OF OM AR KHAYYAM TRANSLATED BY Edward Fitzgerald



HOME COURSE APPRECIATION



OLLABORATION IN ART OR MUSIC is certainly not rare. The world has long been enchanted by the words-and-music combinations of Gilbert and Sullivan, and it seems not at all strange that Charles and Mary Lamb collaborated to produce their Tales from Shakespeare. Yet that Edward Fitzgerald, English country squire, and Omar Khayyam, Persian tentmaker, should owe anything to each other may seem fantastic.

Their birthplaces are three thousand miles apart, their birth dates separated by seven hundred years. They spoke different languages, followed different customs, knew different civilizations. Surely no partnership was ever stranger. Yet each owes his universal fame to the other.

Omar had not been popular with his own countrymen. His spirit contrasted sharply with that of his contemporary poets, who extolled an austere and other-worldly mysticism. Omar instead preached a doctrine of "eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die." His poetry concentrates on wordly pleasures, while his contemporaries concerned themselves with the mysteries of eternity. And so it was that Omar's writings went unappreciated by his own people. The scattered rhymes he wrote toward the end of the eleventh or beginning of the twelfth centuries were almost unknown to the world until the shy, retiring Fitzgerald first began to study Persian in the middle of the nineteenth century.

PERSIAN AND VICTORIAN CO-CREATORS

What fitzgerald accomplished for the verses of Omar Khayyam was more than a mere translation. It is in fact almost impossible to determine what part of the excellence of the poetry is owed to the Persian writer and what part to his English collaborator.

Fitzgerald did not inherit a single, consistent body of writing, but scattered pieces, jotted down in various moods, and lacking in perceptible order. It is the custom among Persians to arrange their collections of poetry artificially, according to the last consonants of the rhyming words. Thus, Omar's original collection might resolve itself into a series of great contrasts and alternating feelings. We might find the poorest creations of his idle moods in the company of his most mature and polished accomplishments.

Fitzgerald gave order to this chaos. Even the rhyme scheme—in which the first, second and fourth lines are rhymed, while the third line is unrhymed so as to prepare for the power of the concluding statement—is primarily Fitzgerald's. We can appreciate more fully the value of Fitzgerald's re-creation if we compare his results with a literal prose translation, such as that of Justin McCarthy:

When the hands holds a wheaten loaf, flesh, and a flagon of wine in fellowship with tulip-cheeks in some lonely spot, behold such delight as is not given to all sultans.

The meaning is deep and suggestive, and certainly the proper material for poetry; but it is not yet poetry, for it lacks the rhythm and music that distinguish true poetry from poetic prose. As Fitzgerald renders the same thought, the thought itself becomes music:

A Book of Verses underneath the Bough, A Jug of Wine, a Loaf of Bread—and Thou Beside me singing in the Wilderness— Oh, Wilderness were Paradise enow!

The rhythm does not merely adorn the thought, as a decoration adorns a vase, but forms the very thought itself, giving it a vividness and intensity that elevate it to the realm of poetry.

Only by such a juxtaposition can we who read no Persian begin to understand how much we owe to Fitzgerald's artistry. To say that Fitzgerald translated the verses of Omar Khayyam is to give Fitzgerald far less than his due. Unlike most translators, Fitzgerald must share any praise we heap on Omar.

OMAR KHAYYAM

The LIFE OF THE AUTHOR of the Persian Rubaiyat is shrouded in myth and mystery. Most of what is repeated about him has been derived from the legends of his time, and scholars still dispute as to

how much of these tales is based on truth and how much can be traced to the romanticism of the Oriental imagination.

We do know that Omar Khayyam was born at Naishapur sometime between 1015 and 1020 A.D., and that he died in the city of his birth in 1123. We know too that he was a student of algebra and astronomy and that he helped to reform the Persian calendar. The basic source of whatever else we know of Omar is contained in the testimony of one of his contemporaries, Nizam-ul-Mulk, the minister of the Sultan. He speaks of Omar in his Wasiyat (Testament) that he left behind as a record for future historians.

Here Nizam-ul-Mulk tells of studying with the Imam Mowaffak of Naishapur, who was considered one of the wisest men of his times, and how, while he was under the guidance of this famous teacher, he met Omar Khayyam who had also enrolled as a student. The two students, plus a third named Ben Sabbah, became close friends, studying together and repeating aloud the lessons they had learned. One day Ben Sabbah said to them: "It is a universal belief that the pupils of the Imam Mowaffak will attain to fortune. Now, even if we all do not attain thereto, without doubt one of us will; what then shall be our mutual pledge and bond?" Nizam relates that he and Omar replied: "Be it what you please." "Well," answered Ben Sabbah, "let us make a vow that to whomever this fortune falls, he shall share it equally with the rest, and reserve no pre-eminence for himself." "Be it so," the other two agreed.

Years passed and Nizam became minister to the Sultan. In time both his schoolfellows came to claim a share of his good fortune under the terms of their old vow. Ben Sabbah claimed a place in the government, which was granted, but his ambition led him into disaster. Omar surprised the minister with the simplicity of his request: "The greatest boon you can confer on me," he said, "is to let me live in a corner under the shadow of your fortune, to spread wide the advantages of science and pray for your long life and prosperity." When the minister realized that Omar was sincere, he granted him a yearly pension and Omar continued to live and study in Naishapur. The next Sultan invited Omar to his court, where Omar became famous for his ability in science and mathematics, and where he compiled a treatise on algebra. When the Sultan decided to reform the calendar, he summoned eight of the nation's most learned men, Omar among them.

Nizam also tells us that Omar's poetical name "Khayyam" means "tentmaker," and it is said that he practiced the trade before his pen-

sion released him to pursue his studies. Omar himself refers to his trade in the following lighthearted verse:

Khayyam, who stitched the tents of science, Has fallen in grief's furnace and been suddenly burned; The shears of Fate have cut the tent ropes of his life, And the broker of Hope has sold him for nothing!

During his own lifetime Omar's fame rested primarily on his accomplishments in science and mathematics; no mention is made of him as a poet. The manuscripts of his poems are rare, and those that do exist are in extraordinarily damaged condition. Fortunately one of those manuscripts that managed to find its way westward came to the attention of Edward Fitzgerald, whose efforts transformed the scattered rhymes from little-known religious protests into one of the most famous collections of verse the world has ever known.

EDWARD FITZGERALD

Edward Fitzgerald was born in 1809 in Suffolk, England. He was educated at Cambridge, and soon after graduation he retired to lead the quiet life of a scholar, financially secure in his father's wealth. In 1851, at the age of forty-two, he published his first book, Euphranor, a prose work based on memories of his happy life at Cambridge. A few years later he decided to learn Persian from his friend Edward Cowell. It was while he was studying this out-of-the-way language that he discovered the relatively unknown writings of Omar Khayyam.

Six years later, in 1859, he had assembled some seventy-four verses. He timorously submitted them to *Fraser's Magazine*. After months of waiting, he realized that the restrictive morality of his time would not allow the publication of poetry so concerned with hedonistic pleasure. He decided to publish the verses himself.

Adding some quatrains that he had eliminated as too outspoken on first submitting the verses to Fraser's, he had a small pamphlet printed anonymously. Fitzgerald had been sure the verses would arouse controversy, but this was not the case. The publication went unnoticed—so much so, that the books were finally remaindered at a penny apiece. They continued to be neglected until 1860, when the famous painter and poet, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, found a copy among a collection of odd book bargains. Rossetti was so enthusiastic about his find that he sent his friends hunting through London in search of the

small pamphlet of poetry. The controversy Fitzgerald had awaited finally began. Some insisted that the figure of the Persian poet was a hoax; but the stronger the voices of the cynics and critics became, the greater grew Fitzgerald's fame.

Nine years later, in 1868, Fitzgerald published a second edition of the Rubaiyat. The original seventy-five verses were increased to one hundred and ten, and Fitzgerald altered some of his previous translations. Again the work was published anonymously. In 1872, when Fitzgerald was sixty-three, a third edition appeared. It contained further changes, and this time Fitzgerald reduced the number of quatrains to one hundred and one, which was to remain the standard number. In 1879 and 1889 the fourth and fifth editions were printed, the fifth edition appearing six years after Fitzgerald's death. The shy Fitzgerald had continued to withhold his name from the publication even after it had attained a notable success, and it was only after his death that his name was listed on the title page. Since then his name has appeared on the title pages of at least three hundred editions, including a grand, jeweled copy of the Rubaiyat that went down with the Titanic in 1912.

THE POETIC STYLE OF THE "RUBAIYAT"

THE "RUBAIYAT" TAKES ITS NAME from the Persian word ruba-i, which means "composed of four," the plural of which is the word ruba-iyat. Omar's work is set forth in a series of four-line stanzas; thus its title may be translated literally as "many compositions of four."

The rhyme scheme follows a pattern of a-a-b-a. That is, the first, second and fourth lines rhyme, while the third line is left free. After the first two rhymed lines, the third, unrhymed line creates a tension by breaking the sound pattern; it seems, to use Fitzgerald's own words, "to lift and suspend the wave that falls over in the last." The fact that the fourth line does not rhyme with the third but goes back to the second acts to bind the thoughts of the stanza tightly together.

The simplicity of the rhythm of the Rubaiyat is intensified by the startling quality of much of Omar's imagery. For example, he speaks of daybreak as morning flinging the stone that puts the stars to flight. By using such descriptive pictures, Omar makes his thought vivid and concrete. His images are always new and fresh, even when he uses such common figures as the shattered glass, the cup and the wine, or the potter and his clay, and they are always employed with originality and vigor. The poet is always in control of his material, exercising

economy in the number of his word pictures so that each will stand out singly and clearly.

THE THOUGHTS EXPRESSED IN THE "RUBAIYAT"

THE POETIC STYLE OF THE "RUBAIYAT" as we know it may, in greater part, be Fitzgerald's; but the philosophy embodied in the verses is Omar's.

Although the Rubaiyat is generally characterized by the simple Greek warning "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die," a little analysis of the verses makes clear that the Rubaiyat is much more complex than that simple line would indicate. The gaiety which fills the Rubaiyat is the outcome of a tragic perception of life. As Omar sees the world, all is illusion, misery and eventual extinction:

The Worldly Hope men set their Hearts upon Turns Ashes—or it prospers; and anon, Like Snow upon the Desert's dusty Face Lighting a little Hour or two—is gone.

The world and man are out of joint, and the universe is blind to man's dearest aspirations. All that he sets his heart on is denied him, all that is essential to the meaning of his life he finds to be unobtainable. And so he cries out against the universe:

Ah Love! could you and I with Him conspire To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire, Would not we shatter it to bits—and then Remold it nearer to the Heart's Desire!

These are not the hasty expressions of a simple seeker of pleasure. These are the mature reflections of one who has earnestly sought all that life might offer, only to find, after weary search, nothing of any lasting significance. Man is stretched tight between two eternities of nothingness:

A Moment's Halt—a momentary taste
Of being from the Well amid the Waste—
And Lo!—the phantom Caravan has reached
The Nothing it set out from—Oh, make haste!

It is this persistent anxiety in the face of death and futility that

spurs the Persian poet on in his quest for pleasure. If the only certainty is that death must eventually break the brittle structure of our lives, then we must find what pleasure we can in the moment that passes:

Some for the Glories of This World; and some Sigh for the Prophet's Paradise to come; Ah, take the Cash, and let the Credit go, Nor heed the rumble of a distant Drum!

It is this knowledge of the pain in pleasure, this mingling of an awareness of futility with a restless striving for satisfaction, this sense of the bitter-sweetness of human existence that gives the Rubaiyat its distinctive and characteristic tone. The world dissolves in Omar's tightest grasp, and he is left with emptiness and fear of death. He seeks the pleasures of wine and flesh to fill the agonizing void left in his heart by the world's indifference to his dreams:

What, without asking, hither hurried Whence? And, without asking, Whither hurried hence! Oh, many a Cup of this forbidden Wine Must drown the memory of that insolence!

So the cup is sought to quell man's anxiety in the face of the world's brutality. If the world forever denies that which we require in order to give our lives some lasting value, we are left with that one consolation not denied us—absorption in the moment.

Omar sought the answers to the riddles of the universe. He strove to uncover the final purpose of his existence, but as the world was only vanity and illusion, the answers he sought were denied him:

Myself when young did eagerly frequent Doctor and Saint, and heard great Argument About it and about: but evermore Came out by the same Door where in I went.

Here we have the real source of Omar's dissatisfaction with religion and morality. His is not the irreverence of a perverse schoolboy. He scoffs the serious pursuits of life not because they have no value, but because it has been his experience that they will come to nothing. The supposed insights of the wise are no less vain and futile than the rest of human enterprise.

But there is still another reason why Omar abandons the moral

quest, and this reason is perhaps the essential cause of all his pessimism. The scientific investigations he carried out led Omar to see the universe as a blind, relentless machine that pursued its predetermined course with awful regularity. If all the workings of the universe are fixed and predestined, then so are the activities of man. His course has been decided for him long before he was born; the good and evil of his life have been arranged without reference to his will and depend in no way on the choices he believes he makes:

But Helpless Pieces of the Game He plays Upon this Checker-board of Nights and Days; Hither and thither moves, and checks, and slays, And one by one back in the Closet lays.

And again:

The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ, Moves on: nor all your Piety nor Wit Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line, Nor all your Tears wash out a Word of it.

If man's actions are predetermined, then he is not really responsible for them, and ultimately there are no such things as sin and repentance:

Oh Thou, who didst with Pitfall and with Gin Beset the Road I was to wander in, Thou wilt not with Predestined Evil round Enmesh, and then impute my Fall to Sin!

And so, a "philosophy" is built simply and neatly with very few propositions and even fewer moral obligations. It is the "philosophy" of a large part of humanity which would never admit to having one. And although we may call it naive or Oriental or even immoral, we can appreciate the Persian poet's perception of the vanity of life, which is no less profound than that of Ecclesiastes; and, though our own beliefs are likely to extend to a broader view of life itself, and death, and man's place in the scheme of things, we can still admire Omar's sense of the flux of earthly things and the passing of the flesh:

Come, fill the Cup, and in the Fire of Spring Your Winter-garment of Repentance fling: The Bird of Time has but a little way To flutter—and the Bird is on the Wing.



1

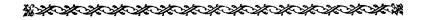
Wake! For the Sun, who scattered into flight
The Stars before him from the Field of Night,
Drives Night along with them from Heav'n, and strikes
The Sultan's Turret with a Shaft of Light.

II

Before the phantom of false morning died, Methought a Voice within the Tavern cried, "When all the Temple is prepared within, Why nods the drowsy Worshiper outside?"

Ш

And, as the Cock crew, those who stood before The Tavern shouted—"Open then the Door! You know how little while we have to stay, And, once departed, may return no more."





IV

Now the New Year reviving old Desires, The thoughtful Soul to Solitude retires, Where the white hand of Moses on the Bough Puts out, and Jesus from the Ground suspires.

V

Iram indeed is gone with all its Rose
And Jamshyd's Seven-ringed Cup where no one knows;
But still a Ruby kindles in the Vine,
And many a Garden by the Water blows.

VI

And David's Lips are locked; but in divine High-piping Pehlevi, with "Wine! Wine! Wine! Red Wine!"—the Nightingale cries to the Rose That sallow cheek of hers t' incarnadine.

VII

Come, fill the Cup, and in the Fire of Spring Your Winter-garment of Repentance fling: The Bird of Time has but a little way To flutter—and the Bird is on the Wing.





VIII

Whether at Naishapur or Babylon, Whether the Cup with sweet or bitter run, The Wine of Life keeps oozing drop by drop, The Leaves of Life keep falling one by one.

IX

Each Morn a thousand Roses brings, you say; Yes, but where leaves the Rose of Yesterday? And this first Summer month that brings the Rose Shall take Jamshyd and Kaikobad away.

X

Well, let it take them! What have we to do With Kaikobad the Great, or Kaikhosru? Let Zal and Rustum bluster as they will, Or Hatim call to Supper—heed not you.

ΧI

With me along the strip of Herbage strown
That just divides the desert from the sown,
Where name of Slave and Sultan is forgot—
And Peace to Mahmud on his golden Throne!





XII

A Book of Verses underneath the Bough,
A Jug of Wine, a Loaf of Bread—and Thou
Beside me singing in the Wilderness—
Oh, Wilderness were Paradise enow!

XIII

Some for the Glories of This World; and some Sigh for the Prophet's Paradise to come; Ah, take the Cash, and let the Credit go, Nor heed the rumble of a distant Drum!

XIV

Look to the blowing Rose about us—"Lo, Laughing," she says, "into the world I blow, At once the silken tassel of my Purse Tear, and its Treasure on the Garden throw."

XV

And those who husbanded the Golden Grain, And those who flung it to the Winds like rain, Alike to no such aureate. Earth are turned As, buried once, Men want dug up again.





XVI

The Worldly Hope men set their Hearts upon Turns Ashes—or it prospers; and anon, Like Snow upon the Desert's dusty Face Lighting a little Hour or two—is gone.

XVII

Think, in this battered Caravanserai
Whose Portals are alternate Night and Day,
How Sultan after Sultan with his Pomp
Abode his destined Hour, and went his way.

XVIII

They say the Lion and the Lizard keep
The Courts where Jamshyd gloried and drank deep;
And Bahram, that great hunter—the Wild Ass
Stamps o'er his Head, but cannot break his Sleep.

XIX

I sometimes think that never blows so red
The Rose as where some buried Caesar bled;
That every Hyacinth the Garden wears
Dropped in her Lap from some once lovely Head.





XX

And this reviving Herb whose tender Green Fledges the River-Lip on which we lean—Ah, lean upon it lightly; for who knows From what once lovely Lip it springs unseen!

XXI

Ah, my Belovéd, fill the Cup that clears
Today of past Regrets and future Fears—
Tomorrow?—Why, Tomorrow I may be
Myself with Yesterday's Sev'n Thousand Years.

XXII

For some we loved, the loveliest and the best That from his Vintage rolling Time hath pressed, Have drunk their Cup a Round or two before, And one by one crept silently to Rest.

XXIII

And we, that now make merry in the Room
They left, and Summer dresses in new Bloom,
Ourselves must we beneath the couch of Earth
Descend, ourselves to make a couch—for whom?





XXIV

Ah, make the most of what we yet may spend,
Before we too into the Dust descend;
Dust into Dust, and under Dust, to lie,
Sans Wine, sans Song, sans Singer, and—sans End!

XXV

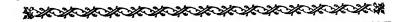
Alike for those who for Today prepare,
And those that after some Tomorrow stare,
A Muezzin from the Tower of Darkness cries
"Fools! your Reward is neither Here nor There!"

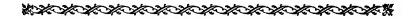
XXVI

Why, all the Saints and Sages who discussed
Of the Two Worlds so wisely—they are thrust
Like foolish Prophets forth; their words to scorn
Are scattered, and their Mouths are stopped with Dust.

XXVII

Myself when young did eagerly frequent
Doctor and Saint, and heard great Argument
About it and about: but evermore
Came out by the same door where in I went.





XXVIII

With them the Seed of Wisdom did I sow,
And with mine own hand wrought to make it grow
And this was all the Harvest that I reaped—
"I came like Water, and like Wind I go."

XXIX

Into this Universe, and Why not knowing, Nor Whence, like Water willy-nilly flowing: And out of it, as Wind along the Waste, I know not Whither, willy-nilly blowing.

XXX

What, without asking, hither hurried Whence? And, without asking, Whither hurried hence! Oh, many a Cup of this forbidden Wine Must drown the memory of that insolence!

XXXI

Up from Earth's Center through the Seventh Gate I rose, and on the Throne of Saturn sate, And many a Knot unraveled by the Road; But not the Master-knot of Human Fate.





XXXII

There was the door to which I found no Key;
There was the Veil through which I might not see:
Some little Talk awhile of Me and Thee
There was—and then no more of Thee and Me.

XXXIII

Earth could not answer; nor the Seas that mourn In flowing Purple, of their Lord forlorn; Nor rolling Heaven, with all his Signs revealed And hidden by the sleeve of Night and Morn.

XXXIV

Then of the Thee in Me who works behind
The Veil, I lifted up my hands to find
A Lamp amid the Darkness; and I heard,
As from Without—"The Me within Thee blind!"

XXXV

Then to the lip of this poor earthen Urn
I leaned, the Secret of my Life to learn:
And Lip to Lip it murmured—"While you live
Drink!—for once dead you never shall return."





XXXVI

I think the Vessel, that with fugitive
Articulation answered, once did live,
And drink; and Ah! the passive Lip I kissed,
How many Kisses might it take—and give!

XXXVII

For I remember stopping by the way
To watch a Potter thumping his wet Clay:
And with its all-obliterated Tongue
It murmured—"Gently, Brother, gently, pray!"

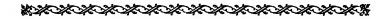
XXXVIII

And has not such a Story from of Old Down Man's successive generations rolled Of such a clod of saturated Earth Cast by the Maker into Human mold?

XXXXX

And not a drop that from our Cups we throw For Earth to drink of, but may steal below To quench the fire of Anguish in some Eye There hidden—far beneath, and long ago.





XL

As then the Tulip for her morning sup
Of Heav'nly Vintage from the soil looks up,
Do you devoutly do the like, till Heav'n
To Earth invert you—like an empty Cup.

XLI

Perplexed no more with Human or Divine, Tomorrow's tangle to the winds resign, And lose your fingers in the tresses of The Cypress-slender Minister of Wine.

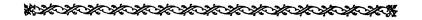
XLII

And if the Wine you drink, the Lip you press, End in what All begins and ends in—Yes; Think then you are Today what Yesterday You were—Tomorrow you shall not be less.

XLIII

So when that Angel of the darker Drink
At last shall find you by the river-brink,
And, offering his Cup, invite your Soul
Forth to your Lips to quaff—you shall not shrink.





XLIV

Why, if the Soul can fling the Dust aside, And naked on the Air of Heaven ride, Were't not a Shame—were't not a Shame for him In this clay carcass crippled to abide?

XLV

'Tis but a Tent where takes his one day's rest A Sultan to the realm of Death addressed; The Sultan rises, and the dark Ferrash Strikes, and prepares it for another Guest.

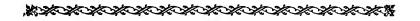
XLVI

And fear not lest Existence closing your Account, and mine, should know the like no more; The Eternal Saki from that Bowl has poured Millions of Bubbles like us, and will pour.

XLVII

When You and I behind the Veil are past,
Oh, but the long, long while the World shall last,
Which of our Coming and Departure heeds
As the Sea's self should heed a pebble-cast.





XLVIII

A Moment's Halt—a momentary taste
Of being from the Well amid the Waste—
And Lo!—the phantom Caravan has reached
The Nothing it set out from—Oh, make haste!

XLIX

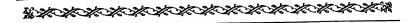
Would you that spangle of Existence spend About the secret—quick about it, Friend! A Hair perhaps divides the False and True—And upon what, prithee, may life depend?

T.

A Hair perhaps divides the False and True; Yes; and a single Alif were the clue— Could you but find it—to the Treasure-house, And peradventure to The Master too;

LI

Whose secret Presence, through Creation's veins Running Quicksilver-like eludes your pains; Taking all shapes from Mah to Mahi; and They change and perish all—but He remains;





LII

A moment guessed—then back behind the Fold Immersed of Darkness round the Drama rolled Which, for the Pastime of Eternity, He doth Himself contrive, enact, behold.

LIII

But if in vain, down on the stubborn floor Of Earth, and up to Heav'n's unopening Door, You gaze Today, while You are You—how then Tomorrow, when You shall be You no more?

LIV

Waste not your Hour, nor in the vain pursuit Of This and That endeavor and dispute; Better be jocund with the fruitful Grape Than sadden after none, or bitter, Fruit.

LV

You know, my Friends, with what a brave Carouse I made a Second Marriage in my house;
Divorced old barren Reason from my bed,
And took the Daughter of the Vine to Spouse.





LVI

For "Is" and "Is-not" though with Rule and Line And "Up-and-down" by Logic I define, Of all that one should care to fathom, I Was never deep in anything but—Wine.

LVII

Ah, but my Computations, People say, Reduced the Year to better reckoning?—Nay, 'Twas only striking from the Calendar Unborn Tomorrow, and dead Yesterday.

LVIII

And lately, by the Tavern door agape, Came shining through the Dusk an Angel Shape Bearing a Vessel on his Shoulder; and He bid me taste of it; and 'twas—the Grape!

LIX

The Grape that can with Logic absolute
The Two-and-Seventy jarring Sects confute:
The sovereign Alchemist that in a trice
Life's leaden Metal into Gold transmute;





LX

The mighty Mahmud, Allah-breathing Lord, That all the misbelieving and black Horde Of Fears and Sorrows that infest the Soul Scatters before him with his whirlwind Sword.

LXI

Why, be this Juice the growth of God, who dare Blaspheme the twisted tendril as a Snare?

A Blessing, we should use it, should we not?

And if a Curse—why, then, Who set it there?

LXII

I must abjure the Balm of Life, I must, Scared by some After-reckoning ta'en on trust, Or lured with Hope of some Diviner Drink, To fill the Cup—when crumbled into Dust!

LXIII

Oh threats of Hell and Hopes of Paradise!
One thing at least is certain—This Life flies;
One thing is certain and the rest is Lies;
The Flower that once has blown forever dies.





LXIV

Strange, is it not? that of the myriads who Before us passed the door of Darkness through, Not one returns to tell us of the Road, Which to discover we must travel too.

LXV

The Revelations of Devout and Learn'd
Who rose before us, and as Prophets burned,
Are all but Stories which, awoke from Sleep,
They told their comrades, and to Sleep returned.

LXVI

I sent my Soul through the Invisible, Some letter of that After-life to spell: And by and by my Soul returned to me, And answered "I Myself am Heav'n and Hell."

LXVII

Heav'n but the Vision of fulfilled Desire, And Hell the Shadow from a Soul on fire, Cast on the Darkness into which Ourselves, So late emerged from, shall so soon expire.





LXVIII

We are no other than a moving row

Of Magic Shadow-shapes that come and go

Round with the Sun-illumined Lantern held

In Midnight by the Master of the Show;

LXIX

But helpless Pieces of the Game He plays Upon this Checker-board of Nights and Days; Hither and thither moves, and checks, and slays, And one by one back in the Closet lays.

LXX

The Ball no question makes of Ayes and Noes, But Here or There as strikes the Player goes; And He that tossed you down into the Field, He knows about it all—He knows—HE KNOWS!

LXXI

The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ, Moves on; nor all your Piety nor Wit Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line, Nor all your Tears wash out a Word of it.





LXXII

And that inverted Bowl they call the sky, Whereunder crawling cooped we live and die, Lift not your hands to It for help—for It As impotently moves as you or I.

LXXIII

With Earth's first Clay They did the Last Man knead, And there of the Last Harvest sowed the Seed: And the first Morning of Creation wrote What the Last Dawn of Reckoning shall read.

LXXIV

Yesterday this Day's Madness did prepare; Tomorrow's Silence, Triumph or Despair: Drink! for you know not whence you came, nor why: Drink! for you know not why you go, nor where.

LXXV

I tell you this—When, started from the Goal,
Over the flaming shoulders of the Foal
Of Heav'n Parwin and Mushtari they flung,
In my predestined Plot of Dust and Soul





LXXVI

The Vine had struck a Fiber: which about If clings my being—let the Dervish flout; Of my Base Metal may be filed a Key, That shall unlock the Door he howls without.

LXXVII

And this I know: whether the one True Light Kindle to Love, or Wrath-consume me quite, One Flash of It within the Tavern caught Better than in the Temple lost outright.

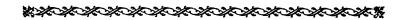
LXXVIII

What! out of senseless Nothing to provoke A conscious Something to resent the yoke Of unpermitted Pleasure, under pain Of Everlasting Penalties, if broke!

LXXIX

What! from his helpless Creature be repaid
Pure Gold for what he lent him dross-allayed—
Sue for a Debt he never did,contract,
And cannot answer—Oh the sorry trade!





LXXX

Oh Thou, who didst with Pitfall and with Gin Beset the Road I was to wander in, Thou wilt not with Predestined Evil round Enmesh, and then impute my Fall to Sin!

LXXXI

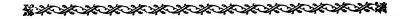
Oh, Thou, who Man of baser Earth didst make, And ev'n with Paradise devise the Snake: For all the Sin wherewith the Face of Man Is blackened, Man's Forgiveness give—and take!

LXXXII

As under cover of departing Day Slunk hunger-stricken Ramazan away, Once more within the Potter's house alone I stood, surrounded by the Shapes of Clay.

LXXXIII

Shapes of all Sorts and Sizes, great and small, That stood along the floor and by the wall; And some loquacious Vessels were; and some Listened perhaps, but never talked at all.





LXXXIV

Said one among them—"Surely not in vain My substance of the common Earth was ta'en And to this Figure molded, to be broke, Or trampled back to shapeless Earth again."

LXXXV

Then said a Second—"Ne'er a peevish Boy
Would break the Bowl from which he drank in joy;
And He that with his hand the Vessel made
Will surely not in after Wrath destroy."

LXXXVI

After a momentary silence spake

Some Vessel of a more ungainly Make;

"They sneer at me for leaning all awry;

What! did the hand then of the Potter shake?"

LXXXVII

Whereat some one of the loquacious Lot— I think a Sufi pipkin—waxing hot— "All this of Pot and Potter—Tell me then, Who is the Potter, pray and who the Pot?"





LXXXVIII

"Why," said another, "some there are who tell Of one who threatens he will toss to Hell The luckless Pots he marred in making—Pish! He's a Good Fellow, and 'twill all be well."

LXXXIX

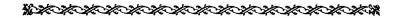
"Well," murmured one, "Let whoso make or buy, My Clay with long oblivion is gone dry:
But, fill me with the old familiar Juice,
Methinks I might recover by and by!"

XC

So while the Vessels one by one were speaking, The little Moon looked in that all were seeking: And then they jogged each other, "Brother! Brother! Now for the Porter's shoulderknot a-creaking!"

XCI

Ah, with the Grape my fading Life provide, And wash the Body whence the Life has died, And lay me, shrouded in the living Leaf, By some not unfrequented Garden-side.





XCII

That ev'n my buried Ashes such a Snare
Of Vintage shall fling up into the Air
As not a True Believer passing by
But shall be overtaken unaware.

XCIII

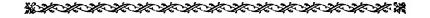
Indeed the Idols I have loved so long
Have done my credit in this World much wrong:
Have drowned my Glory in a shallow Cup,
And sold my Reputation for a Song.

XCIV

Indeed, indeed, Repentance oft before
I swore—but was I sober when I swore?
And then and then came Spring, and Rose-in-hand
My threadbare Penitence a-pieces tore.

XCV

And much as wine has played the Infidel, And robbed me of my Robe of Honor—well, I often wonder what the Vintners buy One half so precious as the stuff they sell.





XCVI

Yet Ah, that Spring should vanish with the Rose! That Youth's sweet-scented Manuscript should close! The Nightingale that in the Branches sang, Ah, whence, and whither flown again, who knows!

XCVII

Would but the desert of the fountain yield One glimpse—if dimly, yet indeed, revealed, To which the fainting Traveler might spring, As springs that trampled herbage of the field!

XCVIII

Would but some wingéd Angel ere too late Arrest the yet unfolded Roll of Fate, And make the stern Recorder otherwise Enregister, or quite obliterate!

XCIX

Ah Love! could you and I with Him conspire To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire, Would not we shatter it to bits—and then Remold it nearer to the Heart's Desire!





 \mathbf{C}

Yon rising Moon that looks for us again— How oft hereafter will she wax and wane; How oft hereafter rising look for us Through this same Garden—and for one in vain!

CI

And when like her, oh Saki, you shall pass
Among the Guests Star-scattered on the Grass,
And in your joyous errand reach the spot
Where I made One—turn down an empty Glass!

